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AREA HANDBOOK for BURMA

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FOREWORD

This volume is one of a series of handbooks prepared by Foreign Area Studies (FAS) of The American University, designed to be useful to military and other personnel who need a convenient compilation of basic facts about the social, economic, political and military institutions and practices of various countries. The emphasis is on objective description of the nation's present society and the kinds of possible or probable changes that might be expected in the future. The handbook seeks to present as full and as balanced an integrated exposition as limitations on space and research time permit. It was compiled from information available in openly published material. Extensive bibliographies are provided to permit recourse to other published sources for more detailed information. There has been no attempt to express any specific point of view or to make policy recommendations. The contents of the handbook represent the work of the authors and FAS and do not represent the official view of the United States Government.

An effort has been made to make the handbook as comprehensive as possible. It can be expected, however, that the material, interpretations and conclusions are subject to modification in the light of new information and developments. Such corrections, additions and suggestions for factual, interpretive or other change as readers may have will be welcomed for use in future revisions. Comments may be addressed to—

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PREFACE

The location of Burma in Southeast Asia close to China, India and North and South Vietnam gives it a geographic significance beyond that which its size and resources might justify. The socialist programs initiated by the Ne Win government, on its assumption of power in 1962, combined with the government's policy of uncompromising neutralism have not had good effects on the economy. In making paramount the determination to let nothing weaken the policy of noncommitment, the government has limited its acceptance of foreign aid and refused offers of economic assistance from abroad.

Burma is strategically situated on the periphery of the free world and is contiguous to the Southeast Asian area. In 1967, almost 20 years after achieving independence, the government was endeavoring to maintain a difficult course between East and West and remain uncommitted in the ideological struggles of the major powers. In striving to be friendly with, yet aloof from, its adjoining states, the long border with Communist China has required a particularly circumspect effort to ensure amicable relations with its Communist neighbor.

The country has resisted becoming a buffer between East and West or a pawn in international affairs. Its efforts to follow an independent and solitary path in its relations with the rest of the world present an interesting and significant experiment on the international scene.

Research and analysis of the principal social, political and economic aspects of the society have involved the usual problems encountered in studying an underdeveloped country that is going through a process of significant change. This was further complicated by the few available contacts and the limited access to documents and other material from the country. Burma's determination to maintain its course of noncommitment has created an atmosphere of withdrawal that amounts to virtual isolation from the international scene. Where desired information has not been available, an effort has been made to identify the gaps and their possible implications.

Some of the material for this handbook was taken from a three-volume study on Burma by Frank N. Trager and Associates, published by the Human Relations Area Files, Inc., of New Haven,

Connecticut. This study appeared in 1956 in monograph form and has required considerable revision and extensive updating.

The spelling of Burmese terms and proper names conforms as closely as possible to local usage. Place names are given as established by the United States Board on Geographic Names. The short glossary included as an appendix makes no effort to be exhaustive but aims to provide a quick reference guide covering unfamiliar terms that the reader may encounter.

BURMA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
FOREWORD	iii
PREFACE	v
SECTION I. SOCIAL	
Chapter 1. General Character of the Society	1
2. Physical Environment	9
Natural Features—Boundaries and Political Subdivi- sions—Settlement Patterns—Works of Man	
3. Historical Setting	23
Early History—The British Conquest of Burma— The Japanese Occupation—Postwar Independence	
4. Population and Labor Force	39
Population Structure—Population Dynamics—Popu- lation Problems and Attitudes—Structure and Dynam- ics of the Labor Force	
5. Ethnic Groups and Languages	51
Ethnic and Linguistic Classification—The Peoples of Burma—Relations Among Ethnic Groups—Language and Communication	
6. Social Structure	65
Historical Development—Rural Society—Urban Soci- ety—Associations and Groups	
7. Family	77
Family Structure—Courtship and Marriage—Family Life	
8. Living Conditions	89
Health and Sanitation—Health Services—Welfare— Food, Clothing and Housing—Patterns of Living and Leisure	
9. Education	103
Educational Tradition—The Educational System— Instructional Staff and Methods—Education in the Society—Literacy and Language	
10. Artistic and Intellectual Expression	117
Cultural Revivalism—Architecture—Music, Dance, Drama and Films—Handicrafts—Literature	
11. Religion	131
Theravada Buddhism—The Role of Buddhism in Bur- mese Life—Buddhist Ceremony and Religious Symbol- ism—The Pongyi—The Sangha and the Government— Buddhism in Intergroup Relations—Spirit Worship	

	Page
12. Social Values	145
Influence of Religion and the Supernatural—The Annual Cycle—The Individual and Society—Rural-Urban Differences	
SECTION II. POLITICAL	
Chapter 13. The Governmental System.....	157
Background of the Constitutional System—The Constitution—Structure and Functions of the Central Government—Government in the Constituent Units—Local Government—The Civil Service	
14. Political Dynamics	173
Administrators and the Political Leaders—The Armed Services—Buddhists and Students—Ethnic Minorities—Communists—The Peasant and Politics—Government by the Military, 1962-67	
15. Foreign Relations	185
Determinants of Policy—Relations with Communist China—Relations with India and Pakistan—Relations with Countries of Southeast Asia—Special Relationships—Relations with the United States—Relations with Great Britain—Relations with the Soviet Union—International Organizations	
16. Public Information	199
Communication Patterns—Newspapers—Radio, Films and Publishing—Government Information—Foreign Information	
17. Political Values and Attitudes.....	209
The Village Dweller—The Political Elite—Political Customs—Socialism—Separatism—The Military in Political Life—Attitudes Toward Government—National Pride and Symbolism	
SECTION III. ECONOMIC	
Chapter 18. Character and Structure of the Economy.....	219
19. Agriculture	227
Natural Resources and Their Use—Land Tenure—Practices and Production—Livestock—Fishing and Lumbering	
20. Industry	243
Resources—Government Attitudes and Policies Toward Industry—Structure and Organization of Industry—Industrial Production	
21. Labor Relations and Organization.....	257
Characteristics of Labor—Conditions of Employment—Labor Relations	
22. Domestic Trade	271
Traditional Trade Patterns—Government Intervention—Transportation	
23. Foreign Economic Relations.....	281
Composition of Trade—Direction of Trade—Organization of Trade—Foreign Economic Assistance—Balance of Payments	

Table of Contents—Continued

	Page
24. Financial and Monetary System	297
The Union Bank of Burma—Commercial Banking— Other Financial Institutions—The Money Supply—The State Budget	
 SECTION IV. NATIONAL SECURITY	
Chapter 25. Public Order and Safety	309
Social Controls—The Judicial System—National Po- lice Service—The Penal System	
26. The Armed Forces	327
The Military Tradition in National Life—The Armed Forces and the Government—Manpower—Mission and Organization of the Armed Forces—Conditions of Serv- ice—Uniforms, Insignia and Decorations—Logistics	
 BIBLIOGRAPHIES	 345
 GLOSSARY	 357
 INDEX	 361

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1 Burma	x
2 Geographic Regions of Burma	11
3 Political Administrative Divisions in Burma	170

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Population of the Major Cities in Burma, 1963	21
2 Historical Periods and Dynasties of Burma	27
3 Age and Sex of the Population in Urban and Rural Areas of Burma, 1953-54 Sample Census	41
4 Estimated Size of Ethnic Groups in Burma, 1963	42
5 Distribution of the Economically Active Population for Burma, by Economic Sector, 1953-54 Sample Census	47
6 Leading Daily Newspapers in Burma, 1967	202
7 Agricultural Production in Burma, 1962-63 to 1966-67	236
8 Electric Power Output and Consumption in Burma, 1961-62 Through 1964-65	246
9 Industrial Production in Burma, 1961-62 Through 1965-66	251
10 Mining Production in Burma, 1961-62 Through 1964-65	253
11 Major Exports of Burma, 1961-62 and 1964-65	284
12 Major Imports of Burma, 1961-62 and 1964-65	285
13 Burma's Major Suppliers of Imports, 1961-65	287
14 Burma's Major Export Markets, 1961-65	287
15 Burma's Balance of Payments, 1965	294
16 Money Supply in Burma, 1960-65	303
17 Grades and Maximum Monthly Pay of the People's Police Force of Burma, 1967	322
18 Burmese Army Ranks and Insignia	341

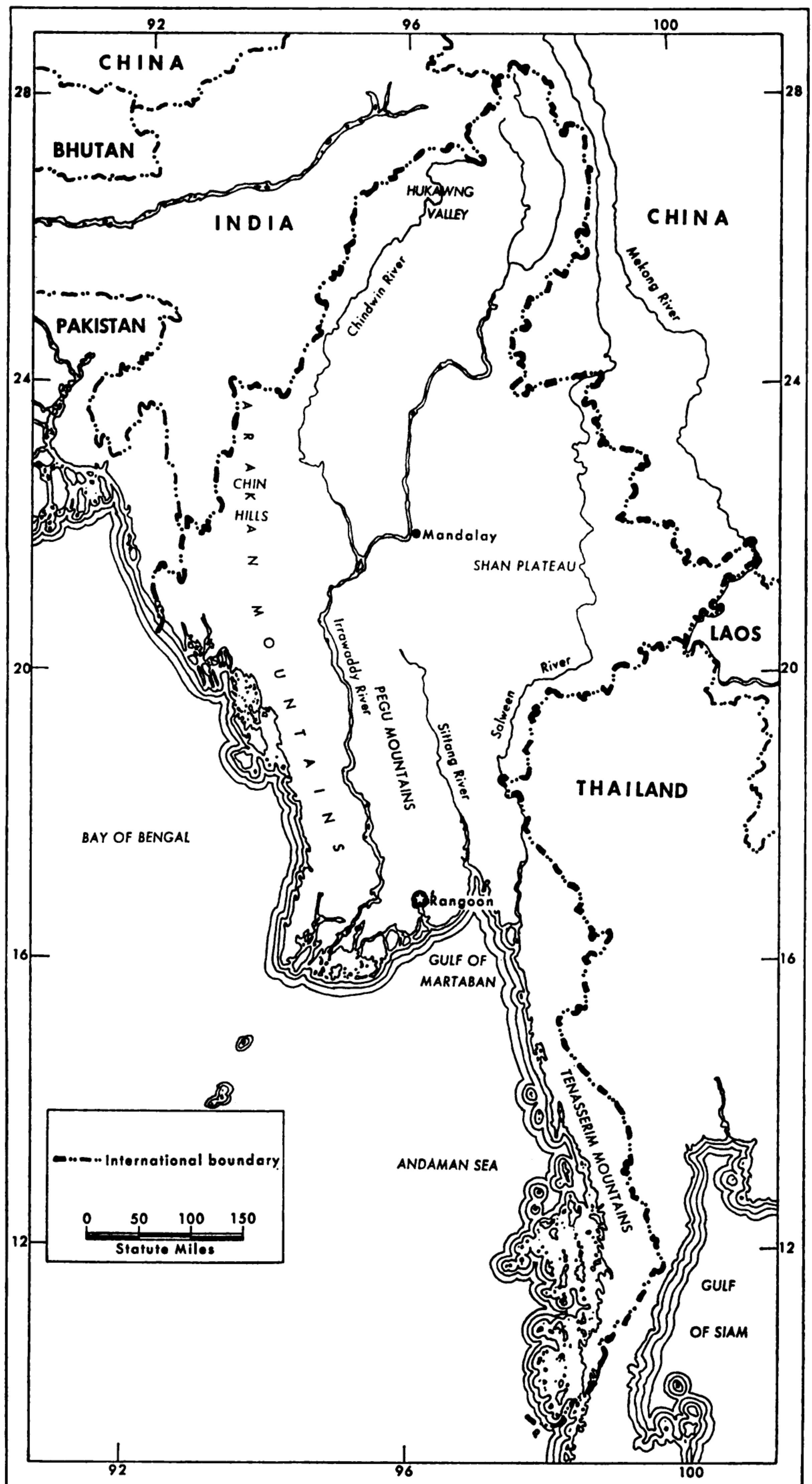


Figure 1. Burma

SECTION I. SOCIAL

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE SOCIETY

In 1948 the Union of Burma became an independent state, with a constitutional system of government that included an elected legislature, a separate judiciary and a parliamentary executive responsible to the legislature. This framework, however, was fashioned from theories and practices not fully absorbed under British colonial rule, and it rested uneasily on traditional cultural, religious and philosophical foundations. The new government thus was faced with the challenging task of making the Western framework stand securely on foundations of the East.

During the colonial period the Burmese population had taken little part in the administration of the government or the conduct of industry and commerce. For the most part, secondary administrative and business positions were held by Indians, who had longer experience with British methods than the Burmese, or by members of some of the ethnic minorities within Burma. By 1948, however, an attitude of mistrust and resentment toward foreigners and foreign institutions on the part of popular leaders had reached a climax. Under these leaders political parties of the newly independent nation were unanimous in their rejection of the principles of capitalism. All were socialist or Marxist in their philosophies, and general public support was accorded a comprehensive reform program calling for what was to become popularly known as Burmanization of the country.

This characteristically Burmese program of nationalism served as a general guide for policy determination until 1962 when a military coup brought into power the Revolutionary Council of military officers under the leadership of General Ne Win, commander of the armed forces. Proclaiming that parliamentary democracy in the Western tradition had failed, the Council suspended the Constitution and set about ruling through the agency of a central control apparatus superimposed on the existing organs of administration. Administration responsive to the military government was ensured by installing military officers in key positions throughout the governmental infrastructure.

This rule has tended to be paternalistic, and its substantive policies have evolved logically from those of earlier regimes. They have differed only to the extent that such goals as nationalization of business, exclusion of foreign influences and integration of ethnic minorities into the national society have been pursued with greater vigor by the Ne Win government. The policy of external nonalignment has been supplemented by one of calculated national isolation from the outside world. The country previously had participated actively in international and regional organizations and had accepted substantial aid from countries of Eastern and Western blocs alike. Since 1962 its role in multilateral organizations has been more that of an observer; it has not accepted new bilateral foreign assistance offers, although in May 1967 work was continuing on some United States and Communist China projects that had been initiated earlier.

The country's 262,000 square miles are located in Southeast Asia just east of the Indian subcontinent and include an extensive coastline on the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal. About two-thirds of the area is located in the north tropical zone. From it, a long, narrow strip extends southward for some 500 miles. This length, coupled with a mountain-broken terrain, gives the country a wide variation in climatic conditions. Virtually all of the long and tortuous land frontier—which is shared with five neighboring states—passes through rugged mountains and heavily forested highlands that have served historically to isolate the country from its neighbors.

History and natural conditions have combined to divide the lowlands, which make up Burma proper, into northern and southern sections. Upper Burma, the country's oldest center of population, is a zone of scanty rainfall, where farming usually can be carried on only under irrigation. Its hub, and only large city, is Mandalay on the upper Irrawaddy River. Lower Burma, the site of Rangoon and other major cities, is heavily watered by monsoon rains and is the most productive and most densely populated region of the country. It did not, however, achieve its present importance until the late nineteenth century, when its economic potential was developed under British colonial rule.

Upper and Lower Burma are not formal geographic entities, but the historical, natural and economic differences between the two regions are so pronounced that the terms are in common acceptance and use. Politically, Burma proper is divided internally into six primary jurisdictional units called divisions. The remaining areas of the country, the frontier regions, are divided into four states, each having some autonomy, and the Chin Special Division, which also has limited local autonomy.

The country's estimated population of roughly 25 million is increasing at a rate somewhat below the average for Southeast Asia. The available land is sufficient to support the population, but before the end of the twentieth century it is expected that the population will double and that land hunger will become a serious problem. In the mid-1960's most of the people lived off the land and were largely self-sufficient. Money income was low, and the average diet was modest in volume, low in protein and much too high in starch content. Few starved, however, and there was a general contentment with the physical conditions of living.

Of the various ethnic groups the most numerous are the Burmans, who represent more than two-thirds of the population. Their language is the official one of the country and is spoken either as a principal or as a second language by most of the minority peoples. Burmans make up nearly all of the indigenous population of the urban areas that produce most of the leading figures in business and public life. The dominance of Burmans, however, is derived from their numerical superiority and their economic and social advantages rather than from any discrimination against ethnic minorities. There is, for example, no evidence of prejudice against the Mons, a lowland people who in past centuries competed with the Burmans for political supremacy.

Except in a few minority enclaves, Burmans are numerically predominant throughout the lowlands, but few have settled in the frontier highlands, where the most important ethnic groups are the Shans, Karens, Chins and Kachins. Each of these groups tends to cluster in its ancestral homeland frontier area, though some have descended into the lowlands, usually to be absorbed by the Burman majority. These national minorities, frequently referred to by the Burmans as "national races," do not generally have readily identifiable separate physical characteristics. Important distinctions in dress, custom and history, however, militate against their intermingling with one another and impede their integration into contemporary Burmese society.

Before the coming of the British no Burmese monarchy had managed to subjugate effectively the frontier national races. Under British rule the frontier areas were kept separate from Burma proper and were administered indirectly by the colonial government through the agency of local chieftains. Integration of these minority peoples, accordingly, has been a continuing problem facing all governments since independence.

Most of the population depends, directly or indirectly, on agriculture for its livelihood, and lives not on individual farms, but in small farm villages surrounded by farm plots tended by the villagers. In Burma proper these villages have remained in place over

generations, although there is some shifting of the surrounding tracts in order to allow land to lie fallow for a time or to bring new areas into cultivation. In the frontier highlands villages may be permanent or may be moved after varying numbers of years to new locations within a limited area. Some villagers are still semi-nomadic and continue to practice primitive shifting agriculture, by abandoning a village site and by moving on as soon as the fertility of the land has been exhausted.

The urban population is growing at a rate far faster than that of the country as a whole. It is still relatively small, however, and until recently was made up largely of foreigners who occupied nearly all positions of importance in the community. Many of the indigenous people, who spend all or most of their working life in towns, were born in farm villages, and some return to their village of origin to pass their last years among relatives. Others come only to seek seasonal employment in industry or trade. The indigenous town dweller, accordingly, has yet to develop a set of values distinct from those of his rural cousin, and a true urban proletariat has not yet appeared.

Buddhism, imported from India a millennium or more ago, is the religion, not only of virtually all Burmans, but also of many members of ethnic minority groups. Christianity has not had much appeal for the people, and Moslem and Hindu theologies have had relatively little success. Most of the minority peoples who have not adopted Buddhism or Christianity are animists, worshipers of the spirits of nature. Christianity is strong among the Karens, the Kachins and the Chins. Observance of animist ritual, however, does not preclude worship as a Buddhist, and Buddhist missionaries are actively proselytizing their faith in frontier areas.

Prevailing Buddhist values include a sense of individual rather than group responsibility and a belief in gaining merit less through industriousness than through such traditional good works as caring for the needy and contributing to the pagoda's monks. There is less concern with material success, and with the status value that accompanies it in other cultures, than with contemplation and enjoyment of the present while preparing for a more propitious life in the next existence. There is little inclination to save, and wealth, if it is accumulated, is more likely to take the form of fine clothing and jewelry than cash or a savings account.

Burmese live in small family units rather than as extended families, although, an impoverished relative is frequently accepted into a household as a kind of higher status servant. Close feelings of kinship with relatives outside the nuclear family prevail, however, and the web of family relationships tends to shape both the behavior of individuals and the organization of village life as a

whole. The influence of family relationships on associations in the broader social context is evidenced by the deference of the younger person to the older and by the unusually high status accorded women. In the family group specific titles are given children in order of age, and the wife is regarded as the virtual equal of her husband. In society, in general, honorific titles are graded with an implied age distinction, and women enjoy approximately the same status as men except in matters related to religion.

During the first millennium of the Christian era the country's history was one of almost constant warfare among tribal peoples who had moved southward through Himalayan passes to settle in Upper Burma, where they found farming conditions reminiscent of those they had known in their homelands. Becoming sedentary, they eventually formed petty kingdoms around villages established by traders from India. As these developments were taking place, earlier migrants into the area were forcibly dispersed into the frontier highlands to the east and the west, whereas Shan migrants from Siam and southern China established themselves along the eastern frontier. Chins from India crossed into the western highlands of the north.

In the ninth century ethnic Burmans completed a southward trek from China into Upper Burma and established themselves as the dominant people in the strategic central Irrawaddy lowland region. There ensued a long series of Burman wars, principally with Mon people who had consolidated themselves farther to the south in Lower Burma. In the eighteenth century aggressive Burman rulers, having at last overrun the Mons, devastated much of Siam and crossed the Indian frontier to take control of Assam.

The intrusion into India proved the kingdom's undoing. The British, who were completing their conquest of the subcontinent, were alarmed by the presence of the Burmese, who were beginning to make diplomatic overtures to independent Indian princes. They refused to provide trading facilities to the British East India Company. The resulting tensions precipitated a series of three wars with Great Britain, the first starting in 1824 and the last ending in 1886, when Burma was eliminated as an independent kingdom and its territory incorporated in the Indian Empire.

Under British rule the previously unimportant coastal towns grew into thriving centers of international trade, particularly after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. During the late nineteenth century the center of population shifted abruptly from Upper to Lower Burma as migrants from the arid north flooded in to exploit the rich but comparatively empty lands of the Irrawaddy Delta and the coast. At the same time the colonial government received an enthusiastic response in encouraging the immigration

of people from the already crowded Indian subcontinent. Accustomed to the ways of the British and remembering the acute poverty of their homeland, they were determined to adapt themselves to their new environment. They became traders, clerical workers and civil employees; somewhat later they became money-lenders and landlords; and those who were eventually to become a majority of the indigenous farmers in Lower Burma were reduced to tenancy.

Chinese also grew aware of new opportunities and began to filter into the country from the north to seek their fortunes as laborers, craftsmen and traders. The principal positions in the civil administration, the army and the police force were filled by British colonials, whereas the lower uniformed ranks were staffed by Indians, Nepalese and minority ethnic groups from the frontier regions. A few educated Burmese found their way into the middle grades of the civil service, but most continued farming, particularly the growing of rice, which was in increasing demand for export.

The general economic progress, coupled with the introduction of the colonial political system, entailed adoption of Western systems of law and education that often conflicted with traditional institutions and served further to isolate the indigenous peoples from the mainstream of life in their own country. Cities and towns became crowded with aliens, and by the beginning of the twentieth century the indigenous Burmese had become a kind of rural proletariat.

Farm villagers made little show of resentment over their inferior status, but early in the 1900's a small but stridently vocal and strongly nationalistic urban intelligentsia began to develop. After World War I a wave of democratic sentiment favoring self-determination led to the granting of limited self-government, and the occupation of most of the country by the Japanese during World War II destroyed the myth of Western invincibility. After the war British rule was reinstated, but the demand for an end to colonialism had reached major proportions, and after a short transitional period full independence was achieved.

The political activists who assumed the administration of independent Burma were without practical experience in government, and a wide gulf separated them culturally and socially from the mass of the population. Moreover, the war had disrupted the economy and caused extensive material damage. From the first years of independence the country was subjected to violence and insurrection.

Probably the most significant cause for the overthrow of the government in 1962 was the reaction of the disciplined military establishment to the compromises and concessions entailed in a

system of government by debate and in the power struggles among many small political factions. The goals of the Revolutionary Council were much the same as those of the previous governments. Moreover, the change in the form of government per se had little effect on the lives of most of the population. Political elections and parliamentary representation were irrelevancies to the numerically predominant rural sector of the electorate, which deeply mistrusted politicians and looked to the village headman rather than to Rangoon for leadership.

Because political activity had been confined largely to cities and towns, the small urban sector of the population felt the principal impact of the authoritarian administrative changes instituted by the Revolutionary Council. The establishment of the Burmese Socialist Program Party and the interdiction of all other political groups meant the eclipse, not only of partisan politics, but also of the primarily urban labor unions that had depended for their strength less on the size and unity of their membership than on party affiliations. Neither political nor labor leaders, however, had the support or the initiative to mount an effective opposition to the government's actions, which seem to have aroused little concern on the part of the urban public at large.

Of greater immediate concern to the public was the Council's policy of accelerated economic nationalization. Earlier administrations had transferred most of the transportation system and a large portion of the country's foreign trade to public sector control. In addition, large industrial concerns, such as the British-owned Burmah Oil Company, had been transformed into joint enterprises in which the government was a partner. Soon after coming into power the Council undertook a more decisive action in the direction of nationalization of business by announcing that all of the country's modest industrial establishments ultimately would be nationalized. By 1966 only 40 percent of the larger industrial firms were privately owned. Financial houses have also been taken over by the government, and in 1966 the last of several steps toward the nationalization of trade caused so many small merchants to lose their sources of livelihood that the government felt it necessary to decontrol some trade items.

For the once economically dominant and numerically significant nonindigenous working population, nationalization meant the end of an era. The progress of Burmanization in the years before 1962 had been accompanied by a decrease of the foreign control of business and the departure of a trickle of businessmen and skilled workers. Implementation of the revolutionary government's accelerated program for nationalization of the economy saw the trickle become a flood. Absentee landlords were prohibited from

collecting rents on farm properties, thus virtually confirming tenants as being owners of their farms. Foreign entrepreneurs and managers were displaced by government corporations; shopkeepers lost their shops; itinerant merchants were no longer permitted to deal in their standard stocks in trade; and skilled industrial workers were either unwilling or unable to retain their jobs in nationalized concerns.

By 1967 the foreigners had gone. Business nationalization had meant the loss of nearly all of the alien managers, technicians and skilled personnel who had dominated the economy for nearly a century. Gone with them were the foreign medical personnel and educators who had staffed the foreign-operated hospitals and schools, for these too had been closed or nationalized.

CHAPTER 2

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Burma, with an area of about 262,000 square miles, is the largest country of the Southeast Asian mainland. Its international boundaries are almost completely demarcated and correspond in general with natural landforms. There is an extensive coastline in the south and east along the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea affording several good harbors which are associated with river mouths. About two-thirds of the territory is in the tropics. The country's outline can be compared to that of a diamond-shaped kite with a long tail. At its points of maximum extent, the kite's body stretches some 800 miles from north to south and 500 miles from east to west. The tail, protruding from the southeastern flank of the kite, extends for another 500 miles to its terminus on the narrow Isthmus of Kra, which is shared with Thailand.

The land frontiers, with the exception of a few water features, consist of tortuous uplands which become ranges defining most of the borders. This mountain ring makes overland transportation between Burma and its neighbors very difficult, and, as a consequence, most of the foreign trade must be seaborne. Internally, the principal communications system consists of the Irrawaddy River system, which drains the greater part of the country in a generally north-to-south pattern.

A distinction is generally made between Upper Burma and Lower Burma. This distinction has considerable geographical justification but actually derives from history rather than from natural features. Great Britain annexed Lower Burma, an area generally corresponding to the present-day political Divisions of Arakan, Irrawaddy, Pegu, southern Magwe and Tenasserim during the first half of the nineteenth century as a consequence of its first two wars with Burma. The remainder of the country, Upper Burma, was not annexed until late in the nineteenth century after a third war. Although they have long been without political significance, these terms still are often used for convenience. Nearly all of Lower Burma is readily accessible to the coast, consists of well-populated and fertile lowlands and has a warm and humid climate. Physical characteristics of Upper Burma are much more varied, and the area includes a majority of the numerous minority ethnic groups.

The country's populated places tend to be strongly riverine, and their sites demonstrate the primary dependence of the people on waterways as lines of communications and as sources from which to draw water for irrigating ricefields. Practically all the larger towns and cities are situated on or close to major watercourses. In the Irrawaddy Delta, where the country's rural population density is highest and the land is most intensively farmed, there is a maze of waterways, some 1,700 miles of which are navigable, at least by small craft.

NATURAL FEATURES

Burma is geographically transitional between the soaring mountains of Tibet and Yunnan, the Southeast Asian archipelagoes and the Indian subcontinent. Strategically, it is significant as sharing extensive boundaries with Communist China and India—two great Asian powers. Almost all of its land perimeter is girdled by mountain systems through which passes are few and arduous. The Strait of Malacca, through which shipping destined for East Asia must move, lies far to the south of Burmese tidewater.

Geographic Regions

Topographic features divide the country into four north-to-south belts, the Shan Plateau, Central Belt, Western Mountain Belt and Arakan Coastal Strip (see fig. 2).

The deeply dissected Shan Plateau averages about 3,000 feet above sea level. The western edge is clearly marked off from the Central Belt by a north-south cliff, or fault scarp, which often rises 2,000 feet in a single step. Much of the surface of this plateau is of a steeply rolling, hilly nature. In other portions mountain masses rise abruptly to heights of 6,000 feet or more.

Several of the shorter streams in this plateau flow sluggishly through broad valleys, but the largest rivers of the region, notably the Salween and the Myitnge—which is an important tributary of the Irrawaddy River—are deeply entrenched. These streams flow with a series of rapids and waterfalls through steep, narrow valleys with little or no land available for cultivation in the valley bottoms. They are, however, of considerable but little developed value as sources of hydroelectric power. The Shan Plateau area available for cultivation is accordingly largely restricted to rolling plateaus and a few small river valleys.

To the south, toward the Isthmus of Kra, the ranges of the Malay Peninsula are repeated northward to merge with the plateau. This area, roughly corresponding to Tenasserim Division, is sometimes treated as a separate region. It is however, topographically associated with the Shan Plateau.

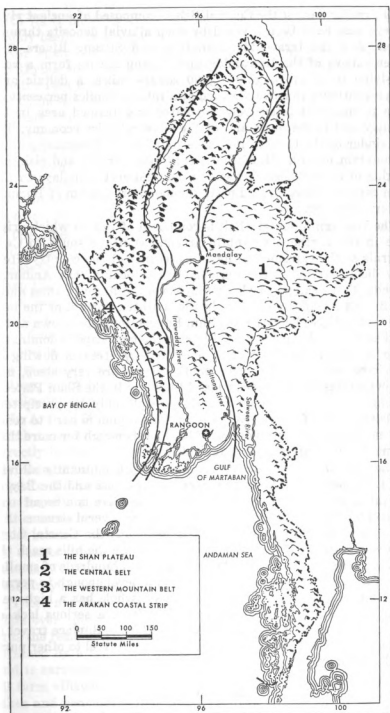


Figure 2. Geographic Regions of Burma.

The major part of the Central Belt is composed of ancient river valleys that have been covered by deep alluvial deposits through which flow the Irrawaddy, Chindwin and Sittang Rivers. The lower valleys of the Irrawaddy and Sittang Rivers form a vast, low-lying delta of roughly 10,000 square miles, a deltaic area which continues to move seaward at a rate of 3 miles per century. This is the most intensively populated and farmed area in the country and is the heartland of the country's rice economy. The remainder of the Central Belt consists of a relief stemming from a mountain mass north of the twenty-fifth parallel and rising to heights of up to 20,000 feet where the west-east Himalayan ridge lines curve southward, leading to the mountain system of Burma's eastern frontier.

The Western Mountain Belt is composed of ranges which originate in the northern mountain arc and continue south to Cape Negrais at the extreme southwestern corner of the country. Here they disappear under the sea only to reappear as the Andaman Islands. These ranges are known by several different names along the Burma-Assam border, but in the southern portion of the belt, where the ranges lie entirely within Burma, they are known as the Arakan Yoma. As in the Shan Plateau, the landscape is dominated by a series of parallel ridges separated by streams flowing in restricted valleys. Here, however, the slopes are very steep, and the mountains are far more rugged than any in the Shan Plateau. Passage across these mountains is possible only by precipitous trails through a few transverse gaps. This region is hard to reach and has a very small proportion of land level enough for more than the most rudimentary type of agriculture.

The Arakan Coastal Strip is a narrow, predominantly alluvial belt lying between the Arakan Yoma on the east and the Bay of Bengal on the west. In the northern portion there is a broad area of level land formed by the flood plains of the several streams that come down from the mountains. To the south the Coastal Strip narrows and is displaced in many places where the hills reach the bay. Offshore there are many large islands and hundreds of smaller ones, a number of which are low lying and level enough to permit intensive rice cultivation. The region as a whole has a high percentage of rich farmland, but it suffers from a serious lack of surface communications with the rest of Burma. Surface travel to Chittagong, East Pakistan, is far easier than travel to other parts of the country.

River Systems

The north-to-south drainage system consists of a river complex, of which the most important is the Irrawaddy River. This river

with its tributaries and other streams which make up the Irrawaddy basin drain some two-thirds of the country. The Irrawaddy River spans the length of the country from the north, above Myitkyina in Kachin State, to its enormous delta where nine mouths feed into the Andaman Sea. Its most important tributary, the Chindwin River, drains the northwest and is fed by tributary streams from the mountains of the Indian frontier. Also regarded geologically as a portion of the Irrawaddy basin is the Sittang River on the eastern flank of Burma proper. The Sittang has suffered from excessive silting as a consequence of cultivation and forest clearing. Between 1910 and 1958 its depth at Toungoo, about the midpoint of its 300-mile length, dropped from an average of 18 feet to 3 feet, and its width doubled.

The other large river, the Salween, rises in Communist China and parallels the Irrawaddy River for much of its course as it passes through the eastern part of the country. Until it reaches the Shan Plateau it has no tributaries, but in that area it has numerous subsidiary streams, some of which are several hundred miles in length. It has a narrow, ribbon-like drainage basin and its course is so deeply incised and broken and suffers such enormous changes in level that it is probably the least useful of the major rivers for navigation purposes. In this river, too, there has been excessive silting, which has interfered with harborage around its mouth at Moulmein.

In Arakan Division there are four major rivers, which flow from north to south and are separated by abrupt watersheds related directly to the Arakan Yoma fold structure. Their courses become trellis patterns near the coast, and all have deltaic extensions. Except for the Kaladan River they are of little use for navigation but are important because of population clusters at their estuaries. The remaining river system, in Tenasserim Division, consists of short streams which run westward to the sea as torrents separated by ranges which are repeated seaward as a string of offshore islands. The rivers also carry heavy silt loads and are important primarily as settlement points.

There are few lakes. The largest is Lake Inle, which covers a little over 100 square miles in a basin area of the Shan Plateau. It is the residue of a much larger water body and is still shrinking. Drained by a tributary of the Salween River, it abounds in fish and is surrounded by very fertile paddies and a cluster of nearly 20 farm villages. It is also a much-favored recreation spot. Other lakes and ponds are for the most part either closed bodies in the courses of former rivers of Upper Burma or in reclaimed marshlands of the deltas. Despite the low incidence of lakes, the country's

unusually high water table leads to sewage and sanitation problems during the rainy seasons, particularly in mountain valley areas which often have poor natural drainage systems.

Relief and Subsurface Resources

High terrain, characteristic of the frontier areas, is more significant topographically than individual mountains or mountain systems. The highest peak is Hkakabo Razi, almost 20,000 feet, on the northern frontier. The second highest peak is Saramati, 12,500 feet, on the Indian border. Mount Victoria, about 10,000 feet, is the highest crest in the Arakan Yoma. None of the mountains in the Pegu Yoma exceed 5,000 feet, and the individual peaks in the Shan and Isthmus of Kra mountain systems are below 9,000 feet in altitude. Shifting cultivation of the highland slopes has caused serious erosion. Terracing of these slopes is not a regular practice, but some soil conservation has been achieved by a system of felling trees laterally across the cleared portions of mountainsides.

Mineral resources are believed to be widespread, but they have never been completely surveyed. The largest area known to contain mineral deposits surrounds the Bawdwin mine, in northern Shan State, where zinc, lead and silver are found. A good quality of wolfram (tungsten) is exploited near Tavoy in Tenasserim Division and in Kayah State. Iron ore occurs in Shan State and in Tenasserim. Copper, nickel, cobalt and antimony occur in various locations and in undetermined quantity, and gold is found along the banks of the Chindwin and Irrawaddy Rivers and in Kachin State. Extensive salt fields exist in Tenasserim, and marble and limestone are quarried in Magwe Division and Shan State. One of the largest sources of precious stones is the Mogok Valley of Shan State, about 90 miles north of Mandalay. Mogok is famous as the world's most prolific and best source of oriental rubies and appears to be the only source of the prized pigeon-blood stone. The crystalline limestone in which the rubies appear has also been a source of sapphires, emeralds and semiprecious stones.

Petroleum, the most important exploited mineral resource, is found near the Irrawaddy River where it passes through the central part of Burma. The only other known mineral fuel is an undetermined quantity of lignite at Kalewa, far up the Chindwin River.

Most of the hilly and mountainous regions were formerly forest covered and over large areas had good, fertile forest soils. Where clearings have been made, temporary cultivation has destroyed much of the virgin richness of the soils. In wetter regions the heavy rains often have washed away the soil almost entirely. This

circumstance is particularly notable in the Shan Plateau where the limestone rock, originally covered by a thin red soil, has suffered from very extensive leaching. The richest soils are the alluvial coverings of the flat deltaic areas and the broad river valleys. Excellent loamy soil is also afforded by the mixed clays and sands of Pegu rocks, but the Irrawaddian and other sandy formations give rise to extensive tracts of very light soil.

Climate and Vegetation

Except in the northern highlands the climate is decidedly tropical. Temperatures in the lowlands are high all year round, and the cool season is cool only by comparison with the hot season. There is considerable variation in other parts of the country. During the wet season humidity is constantly high. On the other hand, the hot season in the Irrawaddy Delta is rarely as uncomfortable as are summer days in many cities in the United States. In the lowland area there is comparatively little noticeable change from day to day, even though the cool season does bring some relief.

The climate is under the influence of the monsoon, and there are three seasons: the rainy season, from the end of May to the end of October; the cool season, from the end of October to the middle of February; and the hot season, from the middle of February to the end of May. The most important of these is the rainy season, for it is upon the rains that Burma depends for its crops.

Although the country comes under the influence of the southwest monsoon, the amount of rainfall varies sharply by area. Along the Arakan and Tenasserim coasts, the annual rainfall is from 180 to over 200 inches, but the dry zone is under the rain shadow of the Arakan Yoma and, accordingly, precipitation is less than 25 inches. Thus, as the wet monsoon winds reach the Arakan and Tenasserim coasts, they are forced to rise and, becoming cooler, cause a very heavy fall of rain. The winds which enter the Irrawaddy and Sittang deltas, on the other hand, meet level land and, although they also bring rain, the fall is only about half of that which reaches the Arakan and Tenasserim regions. After passing northward over the dry zone of the Central Belt, winds are forced to rise to higher elevations and once again begin to lose moisture, but the rainfall is not so heavy as in the coastal areas. Bhamo District, for example, receives about 72 inches per year.

Forests cover an estimated 57 percent of the country. About one-quarter of the forested area includes stands of teak, located on both flanks of the Pegu Yoma, on the slopes of the Shan Plateau, on the lee slopes of the Arakan Yoma and in the northern highlands of Kachin State at altitudes of 2,000 to 3,000 feet. The teak

trees occur not as forests but as individual trees associated with other valuable hardwoods and a variety of other forest cover.

In general, vegetation in the highlands of the northern mountain area is one of dense forest, except where shifting agriculture has denuded the hillsides. In the lower valleys and on mountain slopes to about 2,500 feet, vegetation takes the form of tropical rain forest. Above this elevation, lower temperatures result in a mixed evergreen forest of such species as oak, laurel, rhododendron and chestnut. Above 10,000 feet and extending to the snowline, the forest is composed essentially of conifers. In the highest reaches, however, the trees become dwarfed, and an alpine coniferous shrub becomes prevalent.

Farther to the south, vegetation becomes more complex. Shifting agriculture and the burning of forests to drive out game have removed much of the original tropical rain forest cover which does not return. Instead, a second growth of scrub forest, which lacks the valuable hardwoods of the rain forest, makes its appearance. As in the north, temperate zone foliage is characteristic of the middle and upper slopes of mountains, and bamboo clumps and tropical undergrowth grow densely in the valley areas. In the extreme south, hill areas of Lower Burma consist of evergreen rain forest.

In central lowland areas there are wide areas of open land interspersed with bracken and rough grasses. Where there is less than 40 inches of rain per year, the forest becomes very poor and passes into scrub and semidesert at the lowest levels. True pastureland is rare, which severely limits cattle raising. In Lower Burma there is a great variety of trees and shrubs producing edible, medicinal or poisonous fruit or berries. Coconut palms are commercially important along the coast and, particularly, on the offshore islands.

Wildlife

Animals include tigers, leopards, bears, wild dogs and several varieties of deer. The deer are sometimes hunted as a useful food supplement for mountain dwellers. The predators are sometimes dangerous to human life but, more importantly, are such serious hazards to domestic stock that it is necessary in many areas to place the animals in stockades during the night. Elephants, wild buffaloes and boars cause occasional damage to crops but are seldom otherwise dangerous. Freshwater fish are abundant in rivers and, particularly, in lakes and ponds.

Poisonous snakes are numerous in the countryside and are sometimes encountered by city dwellers. The country, in fact, has the highest mortality rate in the world from snakebite. The rate is worst along rivers in the dry zone and in deltaic areas, and peak

mortality usually is registered during December. Of the numerous venomous varieties of snakes, the most dangerous is the cobra. Other species include coral snakes, true and pit vipers, kraits and at least 15 varieties of sea snakes.

Among the rodent species, the little Burmese rat is noted as a host for fleas, and the prevalent bandicoot rat is known to transmit ratbite fever. Numerous mosquito types are carriers of malaria, and other types transmit dengue and filariasis. Various flies are dangerous as disease carriers, and such other insect pests as lice, fleas, mites and ticks are abundant.

BOUNDARIES AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

The country's perimeter includes approximately 3,170 miles of borders with five neighboring countries and a 1,200-mile seacoast on the Bay of Bengal, the Gulf of Martaban and the Andaman Sea. The boundaries, with the exception of a small, undefined section along the Indian frontier, have been demarcated, and in early 1967 there were no disputes over boundary alignments.

The longest border, 1,358 miles, is with Communist China. Historically, this border area had been a buffer area, although China under the Kuomintang made extensive claims to all of present-day Burma north of a line extending from Myitkyina in southern Kachin State to the Indian frontier, and the Chinese Communists later continued most of these claims to northern Burma. The question was settled by the Sino-Burmese Boundary Treaty of 1960, which involved the transfer of minor disputed areas. Generally the border is a natural one which follows Himalayan ridges, drainage divides and the course of the Mekong River to the Laos tripoint.

The shorter, 148-mile border with Laos continues to follow the Mekong River to the Thailand tripoint and has been fully demarcated since 1896, and the 1,118-mile border with Thailand sweeps southward to its southern terminus on the west coast of the Isthmus of Kra. The line, demarcated since 1940, coincides generally with natural features. The 45-mile border with Pakistan has long been recognized as corresponding with the course of the Nāf River but, despite its shortness, has been a continuing problem because of the tendency of the river to change its course and because it has been a favorite crossing point for illegal immigrants, fugitives from justice, and bandits from both sides. In 1966 a protocol recognized the center of the channel at that time as the frontier. A subsequent change in the course of the river would not change the borderline.

Early in 1967 a small portion of the Indian border had not been fully demarcated, but no border disputes were current or antici-

pated. This border, almost 800 miles in length, consists primarily of mountain and drainage features.

Both Burmese and peoples of neighboring states take an informal attitude toward border crossing. In the mid-1960's immigration was being actively discouraged by the government of Burma, but it has long been traditional for traders, permanent and seasonal migrants and practitioners of religiocultural observances to move freely back and forth across the borders without observing the niceties of frontier markers. Although it is now illegal, the appearance in Mandalay of beggars from Manipur, India, was not unusual.

Movement of persons across the frontiers is controlled more by the physical difficulty of movement than by law or regulation. This relative freedom of movement is made inevitable by the ethnic variety of the country and the fact that ethnic and international borders do not correspond. Shans and Karens are found in Thailand as well as in Burma; Kachins live also in India and Communist China; and Chin and Naga tribesmen are native to India. A few of the ethnic Burmese live in portions of East Pakistan close to the border (see ch. 5, Ethnic Groups and Languages).

Burma proper is divided territorially into the seven Divisions of Mandalay, Irrawaddy, Pegu, Magwe, Tenasserim, Arakan and Sagaing. They form natural geographic regions and their borders are rooted in history. For example, Arakan and Tenasserim were taken by Great Britain in the first British war, and Pegu's borders correspond roughly with those of an ancient Mon kingdom. Topographical features have been of particular importance to the Divisions of Pegu, Irrawaddy, Mandalay and Arakan. Rangoon, in the southern part of Pegu Division, is the strategic communications center of the country, and Irrawaddy and Mandalay represent the hearts of the populous and economically important delta and dry zones, respectively. The geographic importance of Arakan lies in its isolation. During the 1950's there was a persistent Arakanese demand for creation of an autonomous Arakan state within the country. The stated reason was dissatisfaction with the monopoly exercised by the government over rice purchases, but the Arakanese also had a feeling of isolation caused by the barrier of the Arakan Yoma.

The remaining portions of the country, almost entirely mountainous and often referred to as the frontier areas, include the semiautonomous States of Shan, Kawthule (formerly Karen), Kayah (formerly Karenni) and Kachin and the Chin Hills Division. The ethnography and topography of these frontier areas separate them from Burma proper. The border between Kawthule and Kayah States is not determined by geographical features.

The division and state jurisdictions correspond roughly to those established by the British and in some instances trace their histories to ancient kingdoms and principalities. Ethnic groups in the frontier areas are so numerous, however, and the major groups are so widely dispersed that anything approaching complete ethnic homogeneity is impossible. For example, it was estimated in the late 1950's that only about 25 percent of the Karens in the country resided in what was then Karen State.

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

About 85 percent of the population can be classed as rural and over two-thirds of all the people are directly dependent on agriculture for a livelihood. Farmers do not live on isolated farms but in farm villages, from which they go out to till the nearby fields. The larger villages support a few artisans, several shops, the civil administrators and schoolteachers and the monks of the pagoda.

The most sparsely settled areas are in the Shan Plateau, the Western Mountain Belt and the rugged northern hill and mountain portion of the Central Belt. These districts occupy nearly half of the land area, yet contain less than 15 percent of the population. At the other end of the scale are districts with a population density well over 100 per square mile, most of which lie in the lower valleys and deltas of the Irrawaddy and Sittang Rivers. These districts occupy little more than 15 percent of the land area, yet they contain 45 percent of the population. The basic population unit is the rural village, of which there were about 13,500 in 1965.

If only the districts having the highest concentration of population are considered, the concentration in the central and southern sections of the Central Belt is even more striking. The population approaches 300 per square mile in the most densely populated portions of the heart of the delta. The seven most densely peopled districts contain about one-fourth of Burma's population and occupy less than 6 percent of its area.

The population thus shows a concentration in a few areas where natural and historical factors have led to the most intensive development of agriculture (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). Even in the Irrawaddy Delta, however, figures do not begin to approach the 1,000 or more persons per square mile of total area found in the deltas and flood plains of such other Asian rivers as the Ganges, Red, Yangtze or Yellow.

Although cultural, economic and historical influences have come into play in determining what areas should be most intensively cultivated and where farm villages should be located, geographic factors have most frequently been of decisive significance. The most important of these have been the river systems, which form

the main lines of communications and provide irrigation water for the ricefields.

The Irrawaddy River is navigable for a distance of over 800 miles inland from its mouth, and its principal tributary, the Chindwin River, for another 100 miles. The Kaladan River is navigable for about 100 miles, and the Salween River, for 55 miles. For small boats the Sittang River can be used for short distances between shoals, gorges and rapids, as can many minor waterways. In the densely populated Irrawaddy Delta alone, some 1,700 miles of creeks and canals can be used by small craft. Navigability of these watercourses and the amount of water available for irrigation vary by season and by area, but the basic pattern of farm village location relates directly to the closeness of navigable streams for communications and the availability of a dependable water supply for the rice paddies and other farm plots.

Patterns of village layout vary in accordance with location, topography and ethnic character, but they have in common the tendency to cluster in crowded groups of houses. In heavier populated areas, houses are built close together on one or both banks of a stream or, in the absence of a watercourse, along a road. Villages elsewhere are sometimes strung along a ridge or crowded at random in a bottomland. Almost invariably, however, the clustered pattern of houses is maintained. Villages are usually surrounded by a stockade, and within the village the individual house or houses of a family group are further isolated by compound walls. These traditional devices were contrived as protection against the dacoits, bands of armed robbers common to India and Burma, and against the insurgent groups that have been active since the country's independence.

Even in mountain villages, where shifting agriculture is practiced, the village tends to remain fixed rather than moving bodily to a new site after the surrounding farming soil is exhausted. The villages are at least semipermanent and people may venture 4 miles or more from their homes to farm their fields. In villages where the nearby fields have been exhausted and it is necessary for the farmer to walk for a considerable distance to reach his plot, he frequently sets up a temporary shelter, which he uses during the times when work is especially heavy in the fields. In addition, temporary satellite villages are sometimes established in the vicinity of the parent village.

Cities and towns, like the country's farm villages, tend to be riverine. The capital and largest city, Rangoon, is situated on the Rangoon River and is connected by a canal to the Irrawaddy River, on which the second largest city, Mandalay, is located. The third largest city, Moulmein, is at the mouth of the Salween River, and

the fourth, Bassein, is a delta city situated on an Irrawaddy distributary. Most of the division and state capitals and about three-fourths of the 50 largest population centers are situated on or close to streams. In 1963 only 3 cities were estimated to have populations in excess of 100,000 (see table 1).

Table 1. Population of the Major Cities in Burma, 1963

<i>City</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Estimated population</i>
Rangoon	Irrawaddy Delta	821,000
Mandalay	Dry zone	200,000
Moulmein	Mouth of Salween	115,000
Bassein	Irrawaddy Delta	92,000
Sittwe (formerly Akyab)	Coast near western border	46,000
Taunggyi	Southern Shan State	23,000

Source: Adapted from Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, Health Publications, *Burma*, 1966, p. 3.

WORKS OF MAN

Inland waterways and port installations are among the country's more important works of man. Rangoon is a major seaport, and its 13 major wharves handle nearly all of the country's overseas merchandise traffic. Situated more than 20 miles up the Rangoon River from the coast, the city has deepwater access by the Twante Canal to the Irrawaddy River which, in turn, reaches most of Burma proper and portions of the frontier areas.

The ready availability of waterways has discouraged the development of rail and first-class road systems. The railroad network, badly damaged during World War II, was estimated in 1966 to include about 2,000 miles of one-meter single tracks, plus additional mileage which had fallen into disuse for various reasons. Lines fan out from Rangoon, the focal point of the country's transportation system. The principal railroad line extends almost directly north and east of the Irrawaddy River until it crosses to the west bank via the Ava highway and railroad bridge, just south of Mandalay. It then continues northward beyond Mandalay to its terminus at Myitkyina, the capital of Kachin State. Spurs that branch from this trunkline terminate at Myingyan, Taunggyi and Lashio. There is also a line from Rangoon to Prome, about 150 miles to the north, with a branch to Bassein in the Irrawaddy Delta.

An important rail line connects Rangoon with Moulmein, on the eastern side of the Gulf of Martaban, and continues about 50 miles farther south to Anin. The line once ran a considerable distance down the Isthmus of Kra, but in 1966 this section was no longer maintained. A connection between this line and the Thailand railroad system via the Three Pagodas Pass, built by the Japanese with prisoner-of-war labor during World War II, has now been dismantled.

In 1965 the country had between 6,000 and 7,000 miles of highways and roads that appeared to be more important as short-haul routes than as means of transportation over long distances. There were only a few vehicular crossings into adjacent countries, and these were all over mountainous routes subject to interruption by slides during heavy rains. The well-known Burma Road crossed into Communist China from Lashio in Shan State. The Ledo or Stilwell Road, running northwest from Myitkyina, was one of the principal crossings into India. It was supplemented by a road from Kalembo via Tamu to Imphal. Two international routes were the main roads into Thailand. One ran from Kēng Tung in Shan State south to a crossing near the tripoint with Laos and the other crossed the border east of Moulmein leading to Tak.

The main internal highway runs from Rangoon to Mandalay, roughly paralleling and to an extent duplicating the facilities of the railroad between these two terminal cities. Other major roads tend to cross the country laterally and to connect with the Rangoon-to-Mandalay artery or, farther to the north, with the railroad to Myitkyina.

The only international airport with all-weather and base maintenance facilities is at Rangoon. A 1965 survey counted a total of 25 other airfields that served the main cities and towns. There were probably some additional landing strips usable only during dry weather. The regular domestic air routes were the Rangoon-Mandalay, Rangoon-Moulmein-Tavoy-Mergui, Rangoon-Sandoway-Kyaukpau and the Rangoon-Kēng Tung links.

Engineering works have made significant changes in the Irrawaddy Delta and in the other coastal areas of Lower Burma. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, these regions were transformed from sparsely inhabited swampland into the richest and most heavily populated portion of the country. Accomplished largely under British rule, this process involved draining and filling swamps, building dikes and installing an intricate system of ditches and canals. The results were impressive, and Burma became for a time the world's leading rice exporter.

To a lesser extent the dry zone of Upper Burma has undergone a corresponding transformation. In this area too little rather than too much water has been the problem, but the progressive and elaborate construction of dikes, reservoirs, control gates and irrigation canals has transformed the face of much of the countryside. The system, too complex for individual villages to finance, has been paid for by central authorities and has encouraged the abandonment of parched subsistence farming villages and the movement of their peoples into village areas where more prosperous farming under irrigated conditions is possible.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL SETTING

In viewing the history of Burma certain events in particular appear to have had a decisive influence on the character of Burmese society: the introduction of Buddhism, endowing all who came under its influence with a rich heritage of Indian Buddhist civilization; the impact of the West under British rule, transforming the whole economy by the spread of new ideas and techniques; the Japanese occupation, discrediting European prestige, stimulating nationalist sentiment and opening the way to freedom from colonial rule; the advent of communism, with its increasingly complex pressures, both internal and external. Now, with the attainment of independence, the social order is undergoing further changes in directions that are still obscure. Already one can see that, in their endeavor to create a new and better country, the Burmese people aim to build it on what they regard as valuable in their past while incorporating what they have learned and still hope to learn from contact with the outside world.

The history of Burma is conditioned above all by its geography—physical, human and economic. All around the inland frontier it is shut off from the rest of Asia by mountains clothed with thick tropical forests. Within its boundaries, fixed by mountains and the sea, Burma has been, and still is, working out the two main themes in its historical development—welding into one nation the peoples within its boundaries and adapting to the environment and pressures of the wider world outside.

There is general agreement that the modern peoples of Burma are descendants of immigrants from the north. Their racial affinities point to a northern center of dispersion. Linguistically, the contemporary inhabitants of Burma are related to peoples in China to the north, and the occurrence of migrations from the north in historic times is well established.

The southward drive of migrants from the Asian mainland spread far beyond the limits of Burma to Indonesia and the Philippines. These migrants all have in common a Mongoloid physique and a cultural heritage distinct from that of China and India, notable especially in the comparatively high status of the women. In speech, however, they differ from one another. The earliest to find a permanent resting place in Burma, the Mons, speak an

Austroasiatic language which has some affinity with Indonesian. Almost all other indigenous languages of Burma are classified as Tibeto-Burman.

The best guide to the order of arrival of the peoples surviving to the present day is the ecological law that newcomers push their predecessors to either side, so that dispersal is an index to antiquity. On this assumption the Karens seem to have been the first of the Tibeto-Burman peoples to have arrived—perhaps about the same time as the Mons. They were in such close touch with them and with other tribes that the affinities of their speech have long been disputed. Apparently the Karens were followed by the Chins, and these in turn were split up by the pressure of the Burmans, who began to cross the border from Yunnan into Burma not much later than A.D. 500. Still later, the Thai, in their turn driven south, settled in Thailand (Siam) and spread through the eastern hills of Burma where they are known as Shano. Last of all came the Kachins, who never penetrated beyond the extreme north of Burma (see ch. 5, Ethnic Groups and Languages).

Among all these various peoples the Burmans have long been the most prominent, and it is from them that Burma takes its name. Yet, thanks to continuing improvement of communications and to regional exchanges—rice from the southern deltas, cotton and oilseeds from the drier central tract, and timber and bamboos from the hills—that are now customary, the greater part of the people speak the Burman language and most of them are at least beginning to share a common culture. They are all people of Burma and may be classed indiscriminately as Burmese, distinguishing as Burmans those who speak that language by right of birth.

EARLY HISTORY

Even while these mass tribal migrations were still taking place, the first event in connection with the history of Burma to which an approximate date can be assigned had already struck the keynote of one of the main themes in Burma's history—its adaptation to the outside world. During the first century B.C. the Han Chinese developed routes to the West through Burma in order to have more security against barbarian aggression than was offered by the ancient land route across central Asia. These routes ran from the upper Yangtze River basin through the gorges of the Mekong and Salween Rivers to the Irrawaddy River Valley in Burma and thence by land or sea to India along the Bay of Bengal. During the first few hundred years of the Christian era Indian adventurers, seeking gold or trade with China, founded settlements along the Irrawaddy River and the coast.

From about A.D. 600 renascent Hinduism imposed a stricter ban on Indian sea traffic, and shortly afterward the rise of Islam changed the course of trade. The Indian settlements in Burma wilted, and the country relapsed into obscurity, unrelieved until the fifteenth century when Moslem traders from Bengal began to touch at ports along the coast of Burma on their way to the great market in Malacca farther south. Their European successors, sailing south of India, headed straight for Malacca as the gateway to China and the Spice Islands, giving no more than a passing glance at the alternative route to China by way of the Irrawaddy. Not until the early nineteenth century, when Burma seemed to offer market for the new industrial manufacturers of the West, did the people of Burma come into effective contact with the outer world.

Throughout the whole of the period of immigration into Burma from the north the essential social system was tribal, not territorial. Hereditary leaders exercised personal authority over people united by a real or imaginary tie of kinship and by a common religion consisting of the propitiation of local spirits or of some former tribal hero. This lively recognition of the bonds of kinship is so deeply embedded in the social heritage that it is a very real force in the present-day life of Burma. In tracing the history of the country, however, it is important to note that the same factor which united the people within any one group served also to keep them apart from other groups.

Social evolution beyond the tribal stage required that some link transcending kinship be forged that could bind disparate tribes together. In Burma the next stage in this process of unification was attained through the arrival of Indian traders who established settlements in Burma. They brought with them various forms of Buddhism and Hinduism. The former eventually took root in its Hinayana form (see ch. 11, Religion). They also introduced the institution of kingship—second in importance only to Buddhism as a factor in the unification of Burma. The authority of a tribal leader did not extend beyond the people of his own tribe, but a king ruled over all the people within the limits of his kingdom. The evidence suggests that the original Indian trading settlements grew into petty kingdoms by the accumulation of wealth, by intermarriage with the leading local families and by subjugating rival settlements. In Burma this process of expansion is indicated by an ancient Pyu inscription recording the acknowledgment by one king of his victorious rival and “elder brother.”

In numerous inscriptions one may trace many signs of the assimilation of Indian civilization by the Mongoloid tribes among whom the Indians had founded settlements. Thus, when the renaissance of Hinduism put an end to Indian trade with Burma

about A.D. 600, the Indians had already laid in Burma the foundation of a new civilization with new creeds and with a new social organization.

As a result of Indian influence in Burma two considerable kingdoms—the Pyus and Mons—emerged during the first millennium of the Christian era. The Pyu kingdom was centered in the Irrawaddy Valley, with capitals at Prome and Pagan. East and south of this lay the Mon kingdom, with capitals at Thaton and Pegu in the lower Sittang Valley. Farther north, across the frontier of modern Burma, was the kingdom of Nan Chao. Presumably, it was in order to reopen and control the trade route to India through Burma that Kolofeng, the second king of Nan Chao, attacked the Mons and Pyus. In A.D. 832, when Thai tribes from Nan Chao sacked the capital, the Pyu kingdom disappeared from history.

The place of the Pyus was taken by new arrivals, the Burmans. On their way south from the Tibeto-China borders they seem to have halted for some time in Nan Chao. In the ninth century they filled the political vacuum created by the Thai attacks on the Mons and Pyus, and began to emerge as a new force in the history of Burma. By the middle of the tenth century they had established their seat of power at Pagan near the confluence of the Irrawaddy and Chindwin Rivers, and some of them had crossed the hills west of the river into Arakan where now, as Arakanese, they still preserve an archaic form of Burman language.

Thereafter, the history of Burma, at first glance, presents a confused struggle between rival elements aiming to hold and extend their territories. Yet, close analysis reveals a pattern. Before the days of modern communications there were two natural centers of power. A kingdom in central Burma could control both of the two main river valleys, the Irrawaddy and the Sittang; it could dispatch armies to either valley and launch a sudden attack downstream. Also, it was a meeting point for trade with India and China. All the chief capitals of Burma lay in this region—Pagan, Sagaing, Ava, Amarapura, Mandalay. The only exception was Shwebo, a little farther north.

The other natural center was in the south where a power based in the Sittang Valley could hold the Irrawaddy Delta and command a seaport. Pegu, Syriam and Rangoon all filled these conditions. The main rivalry was between the Burmans in the north and the Mons in the south, but on the whole the strategic advantage rested with the Burmans.

The spread of Buddhism, however, rather than force of arms, was the main factor in Burman supremacy, although religion alone could not overcome ethnic animosities. Until some progress had

been achieved in political unification the peoples of the country were not united, even in religion. One of the earliest attempts at political unification was made by a Burman hero, known today as Anawrahta (or Anorata), who made himself master of Pagan in 1044 (see table 2). By the end of his reign, in 1067, he had brought practically the whole of Burma under one rule and had established a dynasty that was to reign for over two centuries. He also had done much to establish Hinayana Buddhism as the dominant religion (see ch. 11, Religion).

Table 2. Historical Periods and Dynasties of Burma

<i>Period</i>	<i>Dynasty</i>
Before A.D. 1044	Rulers of Pagan
1044–1287	Pagan Dynasty
1298–1364	Myinsaing and Pinya
1315–64	Sagaing
1364–1555	Ava
1486–1752	Toungoo Dynasty
1752–1885	Alaungpaya or Konbaung Dynasty
1752	Alaungpaya of Shwebo
1760	Naungdawgyi
1763	Hsinbyushin
1776	Singu Min
1781	Maung Maung
1781	Bodawpaya
1819	Bagyidaw
1838	Tharrawaddy
1846	Pagan Min
1853	Mindon Min
1878	Thibaw

Source: Adapted from D. G. E. Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia*, 1964, pp. 864, 869.

At this point in history, Burma seems to have been in contact with centers of both the Hinayana, the earlier, and Mahayana, the later, varieties of Buddhism (see ch. 11, Religion). Mahayanism lent itself more readily to ritual, magic, priestcraft and priestly domination than did Hinayanism. The Hinayana form of Buddhism, which by its disciples was called Theravada (see Glossary), had no elaborate ceremony or priestly hierarchy.

At the time of Anawrahta animism prevailed among the Burmans, but there existed also the Mahayanist Buddhism that had spread from Bengal to China and Tibet. During the latter part of the eighth century the rise of Lamaism in Tibet led to the attainment of supreme power by Mahayanist priests. Tibet was then in close contact with Nan Chao, to which the Burmans had long been subject. Anawrahta must have known what had happened in Tibet and been a farsighted statesman, wise enough to take warning

from this example and to prefer Hinayanism or Theravadam, which did not sanction claims by monks to supernatural powers.

During the latter half of the thirteenth century, the Mongol invasion of China and the conquest of Yunnan by Kublai Khan stirred up forces that shook all the thrones in Southeast Asia. The kingdom of Pagan fell to Kublai Khan's warriors in 1287 after its ruler refused to submit to Chinese sovereignty. The Mongol emperors endeavored to govern the territories acquired in Burma through a number of puppet rulers, but these soon fell to blows among themselves. After several decades of confused warfare, the rulers of China abandoned attempts to maintain control in Burma, and two centers of power gradually emerged, one in central Burma under the Shans and the other in southern Burma under the Burmans. The period was marked by the advent of Moslem traders from Bengal toward the end of the fourteenth century and the spread of Moslem influence and power. This was the general situation in Burma when the Portuguese led by Vasco da Gama entered the seas around India in 1498.

After the Portuguese gained control of the Malay archipelago from their headquarters at the port of Malacca, Portuguese free lances sought fortune elsewhere in Southeast Asia in the service of local princes. In Toungoo, the lands in the Sittang River Valley of Lower Burma, a new Burman dynasty, dating from the beginning of the sixteenth century, enlisted the aid of the Portuguese against the Mons. The third of this Toungoo line, Bayinnaung (1551-81), extended his sway over almost the whole of Burma, driving the Shans back into the eastern hills where he compelled them to accept his suzerainty. Like Anawrahta, he reinforced his rule by religion. He was diligent in spreading Buddhism in the newly conquered states, building pagodas and monasteries, supporting monks and distributing copies of the Buddhist scriptures, while sternly suppressing the more barbarous practices of animism. His activities against the Shan princes inevitably embroiled him with their cousins in Siam, and from this time onward war between Burma and Siam was a recurrent theme in the history of both countries.

In 1635 the Toungoo capital was shifted from Pegu to Ava, a move that has often been misinterpreted by modern historians as signifying an abandonment of the dream of national kingship and a relapse into the tribal homeland. The rulers, however, realized that only from this strategic center could they enforce their rule over the whole of Burma. In Ava successive kings reigned in seclusion for more than 100 years while the Dutch were building up their strength in Indonesia and the English and French were

contesting supremacy in India. The Dutch displayed only a passing interest in the Irrawaddy route to China until they felt secure at sea against the Portuguese, as later did the English until they could traverse eastern waters without serious fear of molestation by the Dutch. The kings of Ava, however, no longer were in close touch with Pegu, where the Mons had rebelled and set up a separate kingdom in 1740. The Mons prospered, and in 1752 they sacked Ava and carried the last king of the Toungoo Dynasty into captivity.

Twelve years after this catastrophe the Burmans rallied under a new leader, Alaungpaya (or Alompra), who rapidly subjugated the Mons and infused a new vigor into his own people. Under Alaungpaya and his immediate successors the Burmans devastated Siam, destroying its capital, Ayutthaya. They repelled a Chinese invasion, ravaged Manipur and gained control over Assam. Here at last the country was brought into immediate contact with the outer world, for, as the triumphant Burmans were expanding toward India from the east, British rule in India was extending its frontier to meet them from the west. At the same time, the war with Napoleon and the closing of the European markets was compelling England's merchants to seek new markets in Asia for their cotton goods, the first fruits of the industrial revolution. Thus, Burma came into contact with the West on two fronts—political and economic.

The British East India Company in India made various attempts after 1795 to establish diplomatic relations with Burma. But the king, Bodawpaya (1782–1819), a son of Alaungpaya, despised the East India Company as a mere trading concern. He failed to appreciate its strength and, after a succession of victories, confident in the invincibility of his arms, he repelled the company's overtures. At the same time he excited the company's apprehension of hostile action by efforts to form alliances with independent Indian princes.

THE BRITISH CONQUEST OF BURMA

It was impossible that the social order which had evolved in Burma during its long seclusion should withstand the impact of the modern West. Confronted with a more dynamic system which was buttressed by superior technology, the Burmese had to adjust their customs and institutions to the requirements of the new environment. The rulers, knowing only their own little world and flushed with the triumph of conquest, did not realize their danger.

Petty frontier collisions led eventually to the first war with Britain in 1824, which ended in 1826 with the surrender of the two maritime provinces, Arakan and Tenasserim.

Despite this stern lesson the rulers in Burma continued to refuse the trading facilities which the West demanded and still hoped for better fortune in a new trial of strength. In these circumstances a further conflict was inevitable. In 1852 a trivial incident arose out of complaints by two British ship captains of unfair treatment in the Burmese courts. Lord Dalhousie, the governor-general of British India, dispatched an expedition to enforce redress, and before the end of the year a successful campaign was crowned by the annexation of the delta provinces, Pegu and Martaban, which corresponded approximately to the former Mon kingdom of Pegu. The new conquest gave the British control of all of Lower Burma and cut off from the sea the kingdom of Ava.

By now the outer world was pressing on Burma from all sides, not because of its intrinsic value, but as a key to the interior of China. British manufacturers had been urging the potential importance of new markets in that region. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 gave a new stimulus to trade between Europe and the East. The completion in the same year of a railway across the United States pointed to increased United States commercial involvement on the seaboard of China. The French had an eye on Yunnan and were exploring access to it. The Burmese court welcomed the chance to escape the dominance of Britain and sent missions to Europe in a vain attempt to secure aid from France and other Western powers. Thus, Burma, left almost to itself for centuries, suddenly became a center of intrigue in world politics.

In domestic affairs the king, Mindon Min, did what he could toward equipping his people to meet on equal terms the outer world now at Burma's borders. He modernized the administration, improved communications, experimented in industrial enterprise, and sent young men abroad for foreign studies. His throne was insecure, however, and in 1866 the heir apparent, the prince whom he had selected to continue his reforms, was assassinated. To secure his throne and crush rebellion, he urgently needed a better and stronger army. In 1867 he granted trading concessions to the British on condition that he be allowed to import arms, but the British-controlled government in Lower Burma refused to sanction the import of even a few rifles. The immediate effect of this action was to throw Mindon more closely toward France, and his concessions to French interests exposed him more dangerously to the British. On his death in 1878 his successor, Thibaw, was left to reap the harvest.

Thibaw, an incompetent youngster raised to the throne by a palace intrigue, had no military force to overawe rival claimants. He was at the mercy of events and of the British Government. When Britain discovered the impending expansion of French

interests, it took advantage of a dispute between the government of Burma and a British timber firm to send an ultimatum demanding the immediate acceptance of terms amounting to a surrender of Burmese sovereignty. Thibaw, who had neither contemplated nor prepared for war, was unable to resist. After a brief and almost bloodless campaign late in 1885, Thibaw was taken captive and exiled to India, and his territory was annexed. On January 1, 1886, Burma ceased to be an independent kingdom and became instead a province of the Indian Empire.

Under their own rulers the people of Burma had never found a solution for the twin problems of internal unification and external adjustment. Anawrahta's vision of a united national state had never been realized. The spread of Buddhism had done much to unite the various ethnic elements in a common faith but had not consolidated them into one people. Even in the homeland of Upper Burma as late as 1886, and despite Mindon's administrative reforms, the social order still embodied elements of tribal rather than territorial organization.

The final extension of British power in 1886 brought the whole country under one rule, stronger than it had ever known under its own kings. This rule implied contact between Burma and the outer world. It might seem that the two conflicting themes of Burmese history had been woven together in a harmonious resolution. This, however, required an effort of creative imagination not to be found in those days. At that time there was a general belief in economic progress as the key to welfare. British colonial policy had always claimed to be enlightened and benevolent, and in accordance with the spirit of the times, the new rulers of Burma aimed to foster economic progress. In order to effect their benevolent intentions, however, it was necessary to ensure the security of British rule.

Annexation of Upper Burma in 1886 and the consequent extension of British rule to the whole of Burma encouraged ethnic particularism. In Lower Burma direct rule along Western lines was necessary for the growth of trade, but there was little prospect of much trade in the frontier hills, and direct rule would have been too costly. The British Colonial Government accordingly adopted the policy of ruling the frontier tribes indirectly through their own chieftains, thereby dividing them from one another and from the people, mainly Burmans, in the lowlands. This increased the security of British rule by hindering anti-British combinations. The resulting sense of ethnic differences was strengthened by the colonial government's practice of recruiting Karens for the armed forces, together with some Chins and Kachins, and excluding Burmese and Shans.

At the same time, in the interest of economic progress, the British Government threw Burma open to the world. Anyone, European or Asian, without regard to nationality or color, could carry on business in Burma on practically equal terms with British subjects and with no tariff discrimination in favor of Britain. Burma was flooded with immigrants, especially from India and China. This multiplied the racial diversity in Burma and transformed its social structure. Under the pressure of economic forces the society took on the character of a business concern, but with a division of labor along racial lines.

Industry and commerce were developed by foreigners, to the exclusion of Burmese. The latter were employed as judges, magistrates and police, but their economic activities were practically confined to agriculture, especially the production of rice for export. This exposed the people of the countryside to the direct impact of the world market, with the result that large areas of riceland passed into foreign hands, and the Burmese farmers became a sort of rural proletariat. Economic progress required the introduction of Western law, which frequently conflicted with traditional social ties and custom. It required also the introduction of Western methods of education, which struck at the basis of the Buddhist monastic schools. As a business concern, Burma flourished with great economic progress, yet this brought the people less into contact with world civilization than with the world market.

The first decade of the twentieth century saw the growth of political and cultural nationalism and its spread among the Burmese people of all classes. The wave of democratic sentiment, favoring self-determination after World War I, seemed to present the Burmese nationalists with a new weapon. Burmese comprised an overwhelming majority of the population. Their leaders welcomed the idea that the majority should control the government. The colonial government introduced a greater measure of self-government but, under the system of dyarchy first adopted in India, reserved the powers necessary to safeguard the security of British rule and foreign economic interests. This stimulated racial friction and aggravated disaffection. Corresponding reforms in India were having similar results, and in 1935 the British Parliament approved the administrative separation of Burma from India, effective in 1937. The separation was accompanied by a new constitution, superficially more democratic but still embodying a denial of full power to the electorate and incompatible with nationalist aspirations.

This period saw the emergence of a group of young political activists who became leading champions of Burmese nationalism

and were wholly committed to independence. After World War II they provided virtually all of the top political leadership of the reborn Burma. Members of the movement took the title, Thakin (Master). This form of address, required when speaking to an Englishman, symbolized their resolve to be masters of their own country.

In the Parliament elected under the new constitution the venerated nationalist leader, U Ba Pe, had the largest Burmese following, but Ba Maw, most able leader of the extreme anti-British opposition, induced the British mercantile community to support him, and he became prime minister. The Freedom Bloc which he led had the support of the Thakins, but after a few years he was voted out of office in a parliamentary maneuver. In 1940, U Saw, who gloried in being no less revolutionary than Ba Maw and readier to resort to violence, became prime minister.

THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION

The Japanese from about 1935 had been cultivating closer relations with the Burmese, inviting visits by leading politicians and providing funds for anti-British activities. They held out the bait of independence within the Co-Prosperity Sphere under Japanese leadership. During the early days of World War II members of the Thakin group, who came to be known subsequently as the "Thirty Heroes," were charged with subversive activities and fled to Japan, where the authorities gave them military training. They returned with the invading Japanese in 1942.

The occupation of Indochina and Thailand brought the Japanese to the Burmese border, and the destruction of the American fleet at Pearl Harbor gave the signal for invasion. On December 9, 1941, they landed troops in Tenasserim in the extreme south and, with further reinforcements from Thailand, rapidly pushed northward. The British, with limited forces available, could do no more than hold the advance long enough to allow for evacuating Burma and for strengthening the defenses of India. By May 1942 the Japanese were masters of practically the whole country.

The Burmese had never accepted British rule with more than passive dissatisfaction, and under the stimulus of modern nationalism this attitude gave way to active resentment. When the Japanese arrived with a promise of independence they were generally welcomed. However, it soon became evident to the Burmese that they had gained little but a change of masters, although the Japanese made a show of ruling the Burmese through their own leaders. U Saw was at that time under internment by the British in Africa on suspicion of intrigue with the Japanese. Ba Maw,

however, who had been jailed by the British on a charge of sedition, escaped during the invasion, and the Japanese immediately enlisted his support. In August 1942 they appointed him head of the Executive Administration under the Japanese military government. In August 1943 they declared Burma an independent country, and Ba Maw became ruler with the title of Adipati (Head of State).

From the outset the keynote of his policy was the promotion of unity among all the peoples and parties of Burma as the only effective resistance against the Japanese. In this matter one of the most helpful was Thakin Nu (now known as U Nu) successively in charge of foreign affairs and public relations, who was on good terms with everyone. Others zealous for unity were Ba Maw's defense minister, Colonel Aung San (a Thakin and one of the Thirty Heroes) and his minister of agriculture, Thakin Than Tun.

Thakin Aung San and Thakin Than Tun, however, were not satisfied with mere passive resistance against the Japanese. Their aim was to get rid of them, but the only Burmese who sided with the Allies were the few who called themselves Communists. Among these, the most prominent were Thakin Soe and Thakin Than Tun. Thakin Soe went underground, but Than Tun secretly recruited men for active resistance and continued to do so with the tacit approval of Ba Maw, even while a member of the latter's Cabinet. Success depended on the cooperation of the army. Like Thakin Nu and other nationalist leaders, Thakin Aung San, commander of the Burmese forces, soon lost his illusions about the Japanese and was estranged by their arrogant behavior. Meanwhile, the secret opposition to the Japanese was gathering momentum, and in August 1944, Aung San and Than Tun brought it to a head in a comprehensive and widespread Anti-Fascist Organization. In December, Thakin Aung San managed to let the British know that an armed rising against the Japanese was contemplated and asked for their assistance. In March 1945 he surprised the Japanese by suddenly transferring all his forces to the British side and gave valuable help in expediting the recapture of Rangoon in early May.

POSTWAR INDEPENDENCE

Thakin Aung San hoped that the British would confirm the independence which Burma had enjoyed, at least in name, under the Japanese. He reorganized the underground movement, which now came out into the open as the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPEL), and asked that it be recognized in the restored government of Burma. The British, however, had other plans. There was to be a reversion to executive rule as it had functioned before the political reforms of the 1920's. Economic reconstruction

was to be entrusted to British firms employing Indians. Everything was to be approximately as it had been before the war.

The Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League went into opposition and soon demonstrated that if the governor would not govern with their help, he could not govern without it. Thakin Than Tun and the Communists took the opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Communist weapon of direct action. Inflation multiplied discontent, and a strike among the police spread rapidly to the other services until there was imminent danger of a total collapse of government. The governor took leave on the ground of ill health, and after a brief interval a more liberal incumbent who, in addition, had a personal liking for Thakin Aung San, took his place. Thakin Aung San and his associates were promptly admitted to the Cabinet, and shortly thereafter Lord Attlee, the new Labor prime minister, announced that Burma would be allowed to decide its own destiny and summoned Thakin Aung San and other leaders to a conference in London.

In January 1947 the conference resulted in an agreement that Burma could exercise a free choice whether to remain within or to leave the British Commonwealth and that the frontier peoples should have the option whether or not they would throw in their lot with the other people of Burma. In April a general election gave an overwhelming majority to the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, headed by Thakin Aung San, who had now been given the title of Bogyoke (Great General) by his grateful people. Among the frontier tribes there was no machinery for holding an election, but they decided to send representatives who would sit together with the other Burmese in a Constituent Assembly for the purpose of framing a new constitution.

While this was still being drafted, Bogyoke Aung San and five other leaders of his party were assassinated at the instigation of U Saw. Thakin Nu, then speaker of the Constituent Assembly, responded courageously to the governor's invitation to take Bogyoke Aung San's place. A constitution creating a federal union of Burma was approved in September 1947, and on January 4, 1948, the Union of Burma became an independent state, with Thakin Nu as prime minister.

The newly independent country faced a difficult situation. The war had caused devastating material damage, the economy had been disrupted, the political leadership and administrative staff were inexperienced and inadequately trained. The authority of the central government was challenged from the outset by dissident elements of all sorts, and within a few months the country was engulfed in violence and insurrectionary warfare. There were many factional groups, each with its own aims, but the main con-

tenders consisted of assorted Communists, who were seeking to overthrow the government and seize power, and separatists among the ethnic Karens who wanted to establish an independent Karen state.

Largely because the rebellious elements were divided and failed to act in concert, forces loyal to the government were able to contain the attacks and wear down the rebel strength. By mid-1951, after hard fighting and serious disruption of the country's political and economic life, the back of the insurrectionary movements had been broken, although law and order were far from being fully restored. The government, however, felt secure enough to hold national elections, four times postponed because of domestic strife. The Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League won a large majority of the seats in both chambers of the Parliament and Thakin Nu was named prime minister.

With the gradual suppression of civil strife the government turned increasing attention to economic reconstruction and to pursuing its basic commitment to develop a socialist welfare state. The social and economic ills attributed to colonial rule were to be overcome by state planning that would recognize traditional social patterns and values. To carry out such planning by every practicable means was one of Prime Minister Nu's cardinal policies and one that he publicized widely. The grand objective came to be known as Pyidawtha (Happy Land or, freely translated, welfare state) and a Pyidawtha Conference held in 1952 adopted an 8-year economic and social development plan. The plan underwent various revisions, but most of the goals could not be attained. After U Nu lost power in 1962 little was said of Pyidawtha and it ceased to be a slogan, but many of the targets were retained. Some of the programs made very real contributions to the society and economy, not to be measured in statistics.

After Burma achieved freedom in 1948 its foreign relations were dominated by the government's desire to establish and maintain real political and economic independence. Initial pro-Western orientation and British Commonwealth ties did not prevent the country from being the first non-Communist state to recognize Communist China in 1950. Thereafter, a policy of nonalignment in the cold war was developed, and after the early 1950's successive governments adhered to this policy closely, regardless of differences over domestic issues (see ch. 15, Foreign Relations).

Beginning in 1950 relations with Communist China assumed overriding importance in the conduct of foreign affairs by the Burmese Government. There was growing concern over keeping on good terms with this increasingly powerful neighbor on the north. Serious international difficulties over the actions of defeated

Kuomintang forces that were using remote areas of the Shan State as bases for armed incursions into Communist China during the early 1950's were averted through the good offices of the United Nations, the United States and Thailand. Early in 1961 the governments of Burma and Communist China completed the negotiation of a frontier treaty, which settled outstanding border questions, and concluded an economic and technical cooperation and payments agreement.

On the domestic scene the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League still unified by the common drive for independence of the Thakins, initially had no difficulty in sustaining the U Nu government in power. Until the mid-1950's the party was able to maintain balance among the divergent political forces that were emerging, and there was virtually one-party rule, although in a framework of democracy. The very power the party wielded, however, caused growing loss of public esteem as the government's programs for economic and social development fell short of their goals, and there were continuing delays in establishing orderly administration in an atmosphere of law and order.

Prime Minister U Nu survived the attempt to a coalition of small parties of the Left and Center to unseat him in 1956, but within a year or so sharp differences over policy, accentuated by personal rivalries, developed within the ranks of the Anti-Facist People's Freedom League. By mid-1958 the party had split into two opposed factions. Confronted with the probability that neither faction could win a working majority in the elections scheduled for later in the year, and fearful that a determined minority would succeed in holding the balance of power, U Nu resigned as prime minister and Parliament handed over power to a caretaker government under General Ne Win, commander of the armed forces, who became prime minister.

General Ne Win had a civilian Cabinet, but the various ministers were assisted by a large number of military officers in executive and administrative posts. The government enjoyed general public support during its 16 months in office and made considerable progress in restoring law and order throughout the country and in bettering the economic situation. National elections under General Ne Win's nonpartisan government were held in early 1960, and U Nu's reorganized faction of the now defunct Anti-Facist People's Freedom League won an impressive majority in Parliament. A few months later General Ne Win turned over the reins of government to U Nu, who again became prime minister.

From the outset the new administration found itself buffeted by sharply conflicting political forces and was able to maintain itself only by a series of compromises and concessions that weak-

ened the administrative process, hampered the economy and threatened to disrupt the federal structure of the state. These circumstances led to a second takeover by the military.

In early March 1962, General Ne Win's troops seized the key governmental installations, imprisoned Prime Minister U Nu, certain members of his Cabinet and a number of ethnic minority leaders. The system of constitutional government was suspended indefinitely, and a Revolutionary Council composed of military officers took over as the supreme organ of government. The Council vested all executive, legislative and judicial powers in General Ne Win, president of the Council. For an undetermined period the country was to be governed by decree.

CHAPTER 4

POPULATION AND LABOR FORCE

The total population was estimated at about 24.7 million for 1965. Its annual rate of increase and its overall density were not as high as those estimated for neighboring countries. Density varies considerably by region, with the heaviest concentration found in the Irrawaddy Delta area and in major river valleys and the scantiest settlement in the mountainous areas of the frontier. Most of the population is rural, and the few cities and large towns are found mainly in populous Lower Burma.

The composition, attitudes and dynamics of the labor force and, to a lesser extent, of the population as a whole have been influenced significantly by a stream of historical developments which led, early in the 1960's, to formulation by the government of a policy of "Burmanization." This policy has involved efforts to promote a sense of national unity among the indigenous peoples of whatever ethnic origin, to eliminate foreigners from all categories of employment and to replace them with Burmese, with the intent of making available long-sought social and economic privileges to all indigenous peoples on a nondiscriminatory basis.

This policy had its roots in the nineteenth century when the British colonialized the country. The tempo of economic activity quickened as a result and brought about a heavy and continuing influx of people from the Indian subcontinent and China who came to take advantage of the available opportunities. The new arrivals gradually became landlords, traders and craftsmen or undertook the heavy manual labor that was disliked by the indigenous people, whereas the British administered the government and controlled international trade and the beginnings of industry. The ethnic division of labor which developed placed the Burmese at the bottom of the social and economic ladder, concentrating them in small agricultural undertakings in which they were often reduced to tenancy.

The indigenous people were still in this position when independence was achieved in 1948, and the passage of years had instilled progressively a feeling of frustration and some distrust of and resentment toward foreigners. In this economic environment dispossession of alien landlords and removal of alien management and labor from the work force seemed extremely desira-

ble. Steps toward this end were begun soon after independence and have been so intensified by the Ne Win government that by the mid-1960's the process was nearing completion.

As a consequence, managerial and technical skills are in critically short supply in a labor force which includes a substantial number of unskilled unemployed and underemployed in its rural as well as its urban components. Given this deficiency of indigenous skills and elimination of participation by foreigners, it is left to the country's schools and on-the-job training programs to provide a more efficient work force. The government recognizes the short-term loss in production and distribution which has been entailed but regards it as an inescapable side effect of the transitional period during which it pursues the goals of Burmanization.

The available population figures are made up in part from extrapolations based on old census material and in part on fragmentary surveys and estimates by government agencies and individual experts. The last completed census, for 1931, omitted several frontier areas, and a 1941 count was nearing completion when occupation by Japanese troops brought it to a halt and resulted in the loss of all but summary tables.

The first two stages of a multistage census were completed in 1953 and 1954. The first stage included about 2,940,000 persons who made up the de jure populations of 252 towns; the second was made up of about 2,680,000 people in 2,100 village tracts. Completion of this project was scheduled for 1955, but it was stopped by an increase in civil unrest in frontier areas during that year.

The samplings of 1953-54, however, were accepted as roughly representative of the population as a whole and were used extensively in later studies because of their detailed information concerning the composition of the labor force. In particular, they were used as a starting point in preparation of a 1964 report by the International Labor Organization, which offered recommendations for a manpower information program and underscored qualitative deficiencies of the country's labor resources.

POPULATION STRUCTURE

There was no significant difference in the number of males and females in the samplings of population in 1953 and 1954 (see table 3). According to the 1941 census summary, there were approximately 8.5 million males and 8.2 million females. The 1953-54 census samples found women to have predominated in the countryside by a percentile proportion of 51 to 49, while in towns this proportion was reversed. At that time it was estimated that 84 percent of the population was rural, so it appeared that

females slightly outnumbered males in the population as a whole. This was confirmed by an unofficial 1966 estimate which listed 12.9 million females and 12.3 million males.

Table 3. *Age and Sex of the Population in Urban and Rural Areas of Burma, 1953-64 Sample Census*

(in percent ¹)			
Age Group	Total	Male	Female
<i>Urban</i> ²			
1- 5 years -----	14.4	14.0	14.7
6-10 years -----	9.9	9.7	10.0
11-15 years -----	9.7	10.0	9.4
16-20 years -----	11.6	10.9	12.3
21-25 years -----	9.8	9.7	10.0
26-35 years -----	17.2	17.8	16.5
36-45 years -----	12.5	13.1	11.8
46-55 years -----	8.2	8.4	8.0
56-60 years -----	2.8	2.7	2.9
61 years and over -----	4.0	3.7	4.4
Size of sample ³	2,940,704	1,499,488	1,441,216
<i>Rural</i> ⁴			
1- 5 years -----	15.5	15.6	15.5
6-10 years -----	11.5	11.8	11.3
11-15 years -----	10.0	10.6	9.5
16-20 years -----	11.5	10.9	12.1
21-25 years -----	9.1	8.8	9.4
26-35 years -----	14.8	14.8	14.8
36-45 years -----	11.5	11.5	11.6
46-55 years -----	8.4	8.4	8.3
56-60 years -----	3.1	3.1	3.1
61 years and over -----	4.5	4.6	4.5
Size of sample ³	2,679,719	1,311,740	1,367,979

¹ Figures in each category may not total 100 because of rounding.
² Figures for 1953 (252 towns).
³ Number of people.
⁴ Figures for 1954 (2,100 village tracts).

Source: Adapted from U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Law and Practice in the Union of Burma*, 1964, p. 16.

Age structures of both males and females and of rural and urban dwellers in 1953 and 1954 reveal no significant variations, although the life expectancy in 1960 of 40.8 years for males and 43.8 years for females indicates the predictably lengthier female life span. A slight rural-urban variation in the age structure pattern is discernible during the productive years between 21 and 45. The percentage of urban males in this age bracket in 1953 was 5.5 percent higher than the corresponding group in rural areas in 1954, whereas the percentage of urban females was

2.5 percent higher. Since the percentage of rural people of both sexes was higher than that of urban people in younger and older age groups, there is an evident tendency for some of the rural-born population to spend all or most of their working years in urban areas but to return to the village to spend their declining years.

The average population density, about 94 per square mile in 1964, was a little greater than that of Cambodia but substantially less than Thailand's and less than one-fourth of that of Ceylon. Data on regional distribution of population are available only from the 1931 census, which showed the heaviest concentration, 150 to 220 persons per square mile, in the farming areas of the Irrawaddy basin and the lower delta region. Other heavy population concentrations were found in the lowlands of the Irrawaddy and Sittang Rivers. At the other extreme were Tenasserim Division and the regions outside of Burma proper, with 11 to 30 people per square mile. A 1966 estimate showed the average density per square mile for the areas outside Burma proper to be slightly over 30 persons.

Although there are more than 100 indigenous ethnic groups and subgroups in the country and a wide variety of dialects are spoken, the dominant ethnic Burmans make up about three-fourths of the population (see table 4). They live almost entirely in Burma proper, and the minority elements are located in the frontier areas. Each of the five most important ethnic minorities is concentrated in a frontier political jurisdiction which carries its name, as in the instance of the Shans in Shan State and the Chins in Chin Special Division, with the single exception of the Karens who predominate in Kawthule State.

*Table 4. Estimated Size of Ethnic Groups in Burma, 1963 **
(in thousands)

<i>Ethnic Groups</i>	<i>Approximate Number of Persons</i>
Burmans -----	16,000-17,000
Karens and Kayahs -----	2,500
Shans -----	1,000
Chins -----	220
Kachins -----	350- 450
Indians and Pakistanis -----	700- 1,000
Chinese -----	200- 500
Eurasians -----	10- 20

* Based largely on 1931 census, which counted language groups rather than ethnic origins.

Source: Adapted from U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Law and Practice in the Union of Burma*, 1964, p. 8.

The formerly sizable nonindigenous element in the population was drastically reduced by large-scale emigration coupled with a virtual cessation of immigration, particularly since 1963, when promulgation of the Enterprise Nationalization Law deprived many of them of their living and some registered foreign nationals were deported. Chinese, Indians and Pakistanis were found in the populous areas of Lower Burma; Chinese, in the frontier portions of Shan State and in the cities of Rangoon and Moulmein; and Eurasians and Europeans, principally in the major urban centers. The size and distribution of the Indian population (presumably including what is now Pakistani) were set forth in the 1931 census, which showed that 6.9 percent of the country's inhabitants were classed as Indians. The concentration was 9.3 percent in Lower Burma, with the omission of what is now Arakan Division, 21 percent in Arakan and 52.9 percent in Rangoon (see ch. 5, Ethnic Groups and Languages).

Religious affiliation is related to population structure in the sense that virtually all ethnic Burmans are Buddhists, whereas many of the indigenous minorities are animists, and the few remaining nonindigenous elements observe the religions of their ethnic origins. Freedom of worship is practiced, but Christian and other non-Buddhist schools with religious orientation have been closed. At least 85 percent of the population is at least nominally Buddhist, and efforts are being made to convert indigenous elements who still do not profess Buddhism. To this end, in 1966 some 120 missions were reported teaching in the frontier areas (see ch. 11, Religion).

POPULATION DYNAMICS

The annual rate of population growth during the mid-1960's appears to have been about 2.0 percent. Estimates substantially higher and lower than this figure have been made, but it is probable that the rate of increase has been accelerating progressively during recent years. A growth rate of nearly 3.0 percent for the 1970's is anticipated. In 1965 it was theorized that by 1988 the population would total 40 million—double the figure for 1955—a long-range growth rate somewhat higher than the Southeast Asian average. A 1960 estimate quoted by the International Labor Organization, however, saw a much more modest growth rate of 1.1 percent for 1960 and an increase in total population to only about 26 million by 1980.

The available data suggest that the population is increasing at an accelerating rate and that the increase is a consequence of drastically reduced mortality among the very young. Recorded live-birth mortality under 12 months of age dropped from over 300 per thousand in 1945–49 to about 109 in 1965.

In the mid-1960's the population as a whole was growing at a rate faster than the rate of increase in food production, and the government acknowledged that it had escaped disaster only because the country was still a food surplus region. The potential gravity of the situation was compounded by the fact that the rate of increase in numbers of women and young children was greater than that of young men. The rate of increase of mouths to feed, in other words, was growing more rapidly than the number of hands available to produce the food. In the foreseeable future, population control is not likely to provide a practical solution because it is contrary to Buddhist thought.

During the mid-1960's population pressure was already making itself felt in the cities, which had been growing at a rate substantially more rapid than that of the country as a whole. As early as 1931-41, when the overall population increase rate was calculated at about 1.4 percent annually, Rangoon and Mandalay were growing at a 2.5 percent rate.

The most significant internal migratory movement in the country's history began in the mid-nineteenth century, when Lower Burma came under British rule, and the center of population began a shift from the dry zone centering around Mandalay to the sparsely settled Irrawaddy Delta area and the towns of Rangoon, Moulmein and Bassein (see ch. 19, Agriculture). In addition, during the years since independence there has been some movement of refugees from insurgent frontier areas. These displaced persons have gravitated to urban localities and contributed substantially to the crowding of cities.

Migration into the country from abroad has had its principal source in the congested eastern part of the Indian subcontinent. For many years Indian peoples, most of them from heavily populated localities around Madras and Bombay, have filtered into Burma either as seasonal migrants or as settlers. Most have entered by crossing the Nāf River or the Arakan highlands in a trickle which became a flood with the opening up of the rich delta areas of the south during the late nineteenth century. This migration was initially seasonal and occurred in response to a demand for laborers in the ricefields. Many who began as farm laborers became farm operators or landlords of Burmese farmers who had lost their properties because of a lack of business experience.

Much of the initial immigration was temporary, but the British authorities encouraged new settlers, and large numbers established themselves in such urban occupations as shopkeeping and money-lending. More accustomed to British ways than the Burmese, more amenable to hard manual labor and more frequently able to speak English the immigrants from the Indian subcontinent assumed

important roles in the economy and in public administration. Growing Burmese animosity flared into riots which by 1938 became very serious. The authorities were considering immigration control when the spread of World War II to Southeast Asia upset normal administration.

After the achievement of independence a ban was placed on immigration from the Indian subcontinent, and life in Burma became increasingly difficult for people from India and Pakistan. Another exodus commenced. It was accelerated by the Enterprise Nationalization Law of 1963, and, although the law was not directed specifically at Indians, it was most severely felt by them. Only a few were deported, but there was such loss of property and employment that 90 percent of the registered Indian nationals left the country within about 1½ years after the passage of the 1963 legislation. In 1964 it was reported that the flood of Indian departures had reached a peak of 2,500 weekly. Ships and planes were booked for weeks to months in advance, and some left on foot. All were required to leave behind not only their expropriated properties but also most of their personal possessions.

Because the migration from the Indian subcontinent occurred before the establishment of independent India and Pakistan, statistics and estimates concerning the numbers involved list all entering persons as Indians, and it is impossible to tell how many came from what is now Pakistan. Their number was probably much smaller than that of the Indians. Moreover, they did not play the landlord and moneylender roles of the Indians, and consequently did not incur the same amount of resentment. The period of repatriation of 90 percent of the Indian nationals was marked by the exodus of only about half of the Pakistanis (see ch. 15, Foreign Relations).

An entirely different kind of immigration from India, occurring soon after World War II, was the entrance of a few thousand Lushai Chins from the Chittagong Hills of India to join their ethnic kinsmen in the highlands of Chin Special Division. The reasons for this movement are not clear, but they probably consisted of land hunger, famine and wartime dislocation. There is no evidence that people were disturbed by the events which caused exodus of other Indians, and their informal immigration illustrates the ease with which peoples of related ethnic stock can move back and forth across the rugged frontiers.

Immigration of Chinese has been considerable, but it has been unlike that from the Indian subcontinent. They began to enter at a later date, and they came in a trickle rather than in a flood. They were also adversely affected by the Enterprise Nationalization Law, but it is doubtful that their number has been greatly reduced

from the 200,000 to 500,000 believed to have been in the country at the time of promulgation of the law. Unlike people from the subcontinent they have interbred with and adopted the ways and sometimes the names of the indigenous population. Many are reported to have expressed a willingness to go to Taiwan but to have protested expulsion to Communist China. Repatriation to Taiwan has not been feasible, however, because of the absence of diplomatic relations between Burma and Nationalist China.

There is some evidence that a limited Chinese movement into the country is continuing. The extensive frontier is almost impossible to patrol adequately, and little attempt was made to prevent illegal entry before the early 1960's. As recently as the first months of 1967 the Chinese population of Burma was reported to be undiminished, and several instances of detected illegal entry from Communist China were noted in the Rangoon press.

POPULATION PROBLEMS AND ATTITUDES

Burma does not have a problem of pressure on the land. There is still enough land to support the primarily agricultural people and to yield an exportable surplus. There are enough nonagricultural workers to staff the industrial, commercial, service and governmental sectors. Chronic and increasing unemployment exists in both rural and urban areas, but it has not reached critical proportions. Some maldistribution, however, is apparent. The rich lands in Lower Burma and in river valleys are nearing the overpopulation stage, but extensive frontier regions are sparsely peopled.

Since the early 1960's the government has considered the elimination of foreigners from the upper echelons of the labor force and unification of the diverse ethnic elements in the country's population to be among its most pressing problems. Most of the foreigners are gone, but unification of the ethnic groups is far from complete. The process is complicated by the fact that many of the minority groups do not live entirely within the boundaries of the country. Shans, Karens and Mons live also in Thailand; Chins and Nagas live also in India; and Shans and Kachins live also in Communist China.

The expansion of educational, health and Buddhist missionary activities in the frontier areas has been undertaken to reduce the cultural differences existing in the country. In addition, the concept of a unified Burmese people has been extensively publicized through such devices as elaborate observance of Union Day, which commemorates the 1947 Panglong conference in which leaders of the ethnic Burmans and the minority peoples agreed to unite in forming the Union of Burma.

STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS OF THE LABOR FORCE

In 1966 it was estimated that about 6.5 million people of the country's 10 million labor force were engaged primarily in agriculture, but there were indications of a moderate shift away from employment in agriculture. The sampling taken in 1953-54 indicated that, excluding agriculture, the largest sector of the economically active population was engaged in trade and commerce; industry was next (see table 5). It is probable, however, that the nationalization of many trading activities in the mid-1960's caused a decline in the number of persons employed in this sector and that industry had become the most important nonagricultural occupation by 1967.

*Table 5. Distribution of the Economically Active Population of Burma, by Economic Sector, 1953-54 Sample Census*¹

<i>Economic Sector</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Agriculture	62.9
Trade and commerce	10.6
Industry ²	9.3
Services	4.4
Transport	2.4
Mining	0.7
Miscellaneous	9.7
Total	100.0

¹ Estimates for the country as a whole.

² Includes manufacturing, construction, electricity and power.

Source: Adapted from U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Law and Practice in the Union of Burma*, 1964, p. 16.

The 1963 and 1965 Land Tenancy Acts prohibited the levying or collection of rents on farmland and made any tenants the virtual owners of the land they worked (see ch. 19, Agriculture). The Acts were still in the process of implementation in 1967, and their full effect on farm labor could not be determined. During the mid-1960's the government customarily referred to farmers of all categories as peasants. Individuals engaged in nonagricultural pursuits were called workers. These terms appears to be designed to help instill in the people a sense of identity and pride in the Burmese socialist state.

In 1960 a government survey of 1,500 representative households in rural portions of the central region found that over 30 percent derived the major part of their income from occupations other than farming. About one-fourth of the households surveyed were active principally in the transportation of goods or in labor on construction projects, such as road and irrigation system building and maintenance. The small balance was engaged in such cottage industries as basketweaving and pottery making.

A small sampling of urban workers taken in 1957 indicated that slightly over half were between the ages of 26 and 45; less than 2 percent was between 11 and 15; and only 8 percent was over 55 years old. No corresponding sampling was made of the rural labor force, but it seems probable that child labor is much more prevalent, at least on a seasonal basis, in the countryside than in the town. School dropouts are heavy during the first few years of school in this predominantly rural country. Urban employment of children under the age of 15 is negligible, but farm children are known to begin helping with the harvest and planting while still very young and to become full-time farmworkers by the time they reach the age of 15.

Many women are economically active in levels of employment varying from ordinary labor to high managerial positions, but the greatest number undoubtedly find work as unpaid domestic servants in the households of their more affluent relatives. This group made up 6 percent of the urban and 24 percent of the rural economically active population in 1953-54. A majority of the regularly employed urban workers engaged in spinning and weaving are women, and in 1962 women made up about one-third of the civil service. In addition, recent years have seen a substantial increase in the use of women in clerical and sales occupations.

Much of the employment of women is seasonal and takes place in the countryside. Farm housewives may devote part of their time to cottage industry, and the 20,000 tea pickers who go annually into the Shan hills to harvest the tea leaves are predominantly women. Between 30 and 40 percent of the seasonal work is in the rice mills, and as high as 80 percent of the casual employment in village cheroot and cigar factories is done by women.

Women are regarded as the virtual equals of men in most matters, and they have frequently held important assignments as merchants, managers, administrators and highly trained professionals. Many teachers, most nurses and a few physicians are women. This state of affairs is generally limited to Burma proper. Some tribal women in the frontier region have attained professional status, but women of the ethnic minority groups do not normally enjoy significant economic status.

A report of the country's manpower situation was published in 1964 by the International Labor Organization. The report indicated that at the current rate of economic development the available manpower resources appeared to be much more than adequate to meet the need for unskilled labor and that there was no significant unsatisfied requirement for semiskilled labor. In general, however, the level of proficiency in the semiskilled area was found to be low and in need of improvement through training. In

skilled, managerial, technical and professional categories quantitative and qualitative shortages were reported.

In international trade it has been generally acknowledged that the departure of the British left the country without the personnel needed to carry on foreign commerce. In domestic trade the departure of most of the Asian aliens who had predominated in this now largely nationalized field was disruptive. In 1966 public officials were reported to be disillusioned with the performance of school-trained employees of state-operated stores and were attempting to recruit former bazaar merchants. The nationalization program of the mid-1960's reduced the number of job opportunities available in commercial and industrial undertakings. In addition to the job attrition resulting from personnel changes and operational problems, employment opportunities shrank in number with the closing of private firms.

Official unemployment statistics are available only on the basis of employment registers of the government labor exchanges in Rangoon and Mandalay. Between 1948 and 1960 the unemployed listed on these registers fluctuated around a median of 2,000, with no significant change. After 1960, however, the figure rose, and for 1965 it was over 30,000. Reporting of statistics during 1966 was expanded to include areas adjacent to the city of Rangoon. The total reported for January 1966 on this basis was 65,000, and the November figure was 88,500. This substantial increase, however, was probably seasonal.

There is no evidence that unemployment in the farm villages has increased at a rate corresponding to that of Rangoon and Mandalay, but there is some chronic unemployment in villages as well as in towns. A study of one farm village in Upper Burma during the early 1960's found 187 persons working full or part time and 40 persons unemployed. Moreover, there is usually farmwork available during the 5- to 6-month rainy season and during an additional 2 months of harvest, but workers must display ingenuity to find occupation during the remainder of the year.

Values associated with kinds of labor are traditional and work so strongly against increases in productivity that the remolding of these traditional values is one of the government's principal goals. Soon after taking power the Ne Win government announced that peasants and workers must be more diligent and must rid themselves of the idea that hard manual labor is demeaning. In the mid-1960's, however, the remolding process had not been completed, and the white collar still had a status value far higher than the blue.

The government has repeatedly attempted to convince peasants and workers that the means of production are now their own and

that it is in their own interest to work harder. In addition, it has adopted such measures as organizing patriotic and social groups and awarding free vacations and medals to outstanding members of the labor force. It has been theorized that the government supervisors have been reluctant to take firmer measures, such as the imposition of strict discipline and penalties, because of the fear that they might be regarded as overly bureaucratic.

In the mid-1960's participation in all sectors of the economy was open in theory without discrimination to all nationals without consideration of ethnic origin, religion or social status. In practice, ethnic Burmans have replaced foreigners in nonagricultural occupations. These occupations are not closed to ethnic minorities, but the inaccessibility of their home regions, their comparative lack of education and the fact that they are still imperfectly assimilated in the national life indicate that for some time to come they will continue to devote themselves almost exclusively to farming and to some cottage industry.

CHAPTER 5

ETHNIC GROUPS AND LANGUAGES

The population is composed of over 100 indigenous groups belonging to several of the major linguistic stocks of Southeast Asia. In common usage the Burmese refer to the ethnic minorities as the national races, although they cannot readily be distinguished on the basis of physical characteristics.

The Burmans are by far the numerically dominant group and comprise about three-fourths of a population estimated to total about 25 million in mid-1965. The Burmans are also the most significant ethnic group, socially and politically, and are the prime force in the development of a unified nation (see ch. 4, Population and Labor Force).

The presence of several large ethnic minorities, however, has had considerable effect on that development. The most important of the minority peoples, on a numerical and political basis, are the Shans, the Karens, the Kachins and the Chins. The Karens are the largest of these groups but account for less than 10 percent of the total population. With few exceptions the minority ethnic groups are settled in relatively compact blocks of territory peripheral to the area of Burman settlement. In the years after World War II the problems arising from the existence of these ethnic minorities and from their peripheral groupings resulted in the formation of the semiautonomous political units of Kachin State, Kawthule (Karen) State, Kayah State, Shan State and the Chin Special Division.

Except for approximately 1.5 million more recent immigrants from India, China and Pakistan, all of the various ethnic peoples have resided in the same general area for centuries and possess many cultural features in common.

Most of the ethnic minority groups continue to live in places far from population centers, in mountainous or otherwise remote regions and are, therefore, little known to the average Burman. Contact with the national government and culture has been infrequent and has not had a great effect, materially or psychologically, on the more remote groups. Their inaccessibility, added to the fact that until recently little attempt was made to incorporate them into national life, as well as a heritage of minority-based suspicion and

misconception, combine to create serious obstacles to integration with modern Burmese society.

ETHNIC AND LINGUISTIC CLASSIFICATION

First acquaintance with the ethnic and linguistic groups of Burma gives the impression of both great diversity and disunity. However, while there is an extensive inventory of different languages and peoples, most are of little importance in terms of their size or cultural influence on the rest of the population. The most important ethnic groups, numerically and politically, are usually classified under four of Southeast Asia's major language stocks: Tibeto-Burman, Tai, Mon-Khmer and Karen. Although the genetic relationships of these languages were established initially over a century ago, some affiliations are still in dispute. Any classification of the languages of Burma, thus, is likely to be challenged in some regard. The population figures given for some groups may also be open to question, as the numbers used are estimates based largely on Burma's 1931 census and more recent fragmentary data.

The Burmans (the term used here to mean the majority ethnic group) speak a language of the Tibeto-Burman language family, and are distinctly related to the other Tibeto-Burman groups in Burma, the Chins, the Kachins and the Nagas, as well as Tibeto-Burman speakers in other countries of Southeast Asia. Along with standard Burman there are several different languages and dialects, all related to some degree, which are spoken by ethnic Burmans in different regions of the country. Some groups, such as those in Arakan and Tenasserim are referred to as Burman because their culture is like that of standard Burman speakers, though they show very little linguistic similarity. Several small groups of Burmans in southwestern Shan State appear to have accepted elements of Shan speech and culture.

In spoken language the Burmans call themselves Bama, though in literary usage the term in Myanma. They are known by a number of names among neighboring ethnic groups, including Mon among the Shans and Myen among Kachins. The Chins use two words in referring to the Burmans. The term, *vai* (civilized), is used to describe Burman society as a whole, and a more derogatory term, *kawl*, is sometimes used to describe the Burman individual.

Related linguistically to the Burmans are the Chin-speaking peoples of western Burma and the Chin Special Division. The term Chin actually refers to a variety of groups whose languages are more closely related to each other than to any other group. There are 44 named Chin peoples listed in the 1931 census, most of them quite small populations, each one having less than 10 per cent of the total 220,000 Chins. The Chins do not identify them-

selves as a single entity, although many groups use varying forms of the word *zo* (*yo, sho*), as in Laizo, Mizo, Hyou and Asho, as a term of self-identification. *Zo* has the connotation of "uncivilized," in contrast to *vai* and, by implication, Burman. The Chin-speaking population extends across the Burmese national boundary into northeastern India and Pakistan, where it is most usually identified by the term Kuki or Kuki-Chin. North of the Chins are the Nagas, with whom they merge linguistically and culturally. There is reported to be little difference between the two groups, and it is difficult to determine where one begins and the other ends.

The Kachins of northern Burma, numbering perhaps 400,000, constitute a third representative of the Tibeto-Burman language stock. The name Kachin actually includes two groups of people. In the narrowest sense, the Kachins are those whose language is Jinghpaw and whose name for themselves is Jinghpaw. In a broader definition the term Kachin includes both the Jinghpaw and several smaller groups, the Maru, Atsi and Lashi, whose cultures are Kachin although their languages are closer to Burman. Following general usage in Burma, the name Kachin is used in its more limited sense, referring only to the Jinghpaw. There may be several dialects of the Kachin language, though not enough information is available to establish this as fact. The most intensive contact of the Kachins with other ethnic groups has been with the Tai-speaking Shans. There has been a varying degree of assimilation to Shan culture and more borrowing of vocabulary items from the Shans than from the Burmans.

The Burmese Shans, together with similar groups in neighboring Thailand, Laos and China and in Vietnam are members of the Tai language family. The Tai-speakers, next to Chinese, are the largest and most widespread linguistic group in Southeast Asia and are surprisingly uniform with regard to culture. The country's estimated 1 million Shans comprise the largest ethnic minority in Burma possessing a uniform language and culture. They are usually called Shans by the Burmans, but their name for themselves is Tai, frequently adding the name of a local village. Shan speakers are found throughout Burma except in the Chin Hills, Arakan and Tenasserim regions. The major concentration of Burmese Shans is in the present Shan State. Elsewhere in Burma they tend to be scattered and strongly Burmanized. There are dialect differences between the northern and southern Shan states. However, considerable uniformity of culture and language exists among all the Shans, even those in the extreme north of Burma who are separated from the main body of Shans.

The country's Karen-speakers total an estimated 2.5 million if the Kayah or Red Karens are included. These people, however, do

not all share the same cultural traits. They are part of a larger linguistic family which extends across the border into Thailand. Although the status of the Karen languages is still in dispute, they are usually placed in a separate category under the broad Sino-Tibetan stock, along with Tibeto-Burman and a few others. All of the Karen groups do not speak exactly the same language, though they are all closely related. The four major groups in Burma are the Sgaw, the Pwo, the Pa-o and the Kayah (Red Karen, or Karen-ni). The Burmans use the term Kayin in referring to the plains-dwelling Karens (largely Sgaw and Pwo) of lower Burma, and Taungthu (hill man) for the more remote hill Karens (Pa-o).

There are few speakers of Mon-Khmer languages in Burma, the major ones being the Mons and the Palaungs. They are linguistically affiliated with a number of minor forest and mountain peoples of Southeast Asia, as well as with several ethnic groups in Vietnam. The Mons were very important in the history of Burma until the middle of the eighteenth century, although they are now one of the country's least known peoples. Alternative names for these people and their language have been Peguan, Talaing (the Burman name) and Mon (Siamese). The Palaungs, a hill people of northern Burma, have a distant linguistic relationship with the Mons. They are identified by a number of names, most of them only dialectical variations of the same term. Most commonly they call themselves Ta-ang and are otherwise known by the Burman term, Palaung.

Aside from the indigenous ethnic peoples, Burma has sizable minorities of Chinese and Indians, both immigrant and native born. The size of this foreign population could not be accurately determined in 1966. In 1931 there were nearly 200,000 Chinese and perhaps as many as 1 million Indians. After 1962 the Ne Win government's policy of nationalizing foreign business enterprises operating in Burma caused many Indians and Chinese to leave the country (see ch. 18, Character and Structure of the Economy).

The majority of Burma's Chinese population are from the southern coastal provinces of China, Fukien and Kwangtung and speak the Fukienese and Cantonese dialects. Burma is unusual among the countries of Southeast Asia in also having a number of immigrants from the interior of China, particularly from the southwestern province of Yunnan. This group speaks a dialect of northern Chinese, Kuo-Yu, which forms the basis of Mandarin. Some Chinese in Burma came from Malaya and Indonesia and show a closer linguistic relationship to groups in that area than to any in China.

The Indians and Pakistanis, like the Chinese, come from different regions of their homeland and are, therefore, representa-

tives of diverse cultural and linguistic communities. The major Indo-Pakistani language groups in Burma are the Bengalis (mostly speakers of the Chittagonian dialect), the Hindi and Urdu speakers from Uttar Pradesh, Telugus from what is now Andhra State, Tamils from Madras, and Oriyas from Orissa.

THE PEOPLES OF BURMA

The careful examination of the ethnic groups reveals many underlying similarities, especially if the effects of Indian influence are ignored, and if Burma as a whole is contrasted with the rest of Southeast Asia and the world. It must be said, however, that these similarities are seldom known to the peoples of Burma or noticed by them.

Aside from their linguistic differences, the various ethnic groups identify themselves and are recognized by others according to characteristic features of culture, such as the style of dress, the traditional religion and patterns of social organization.

The ethnic groups are of two types of culture, found throughout all of Southeast Asia, and commonly referred to as mountain and plain. The fundamental criteria for distinguishing the two types are relative simplicity or complexity of technology, economy and social organization, and degree of Indian influence.

The culture of the mountain peoples (Chins, Nagas, Kachins, a few Karens and so on) is based on a relatively simple technology. Food is produced by dry farming with only a few simple farm implements. The economy is mainly one of household production and consumption, though some essential items such as salt and iron must be obtained from outside sources. There is very little specialization of labor; everyone except the small children and the aged helps to raise food. Both trade and regional specialization of labor are limited. Individuals belong to few formal institutions. The family and, beyond that, the village, are the major units of social organization.

For the rural plains peoples of Burma—Burmans, Shans, Karens and Mons—the staple food consists of rice grown in flooded fields prepared with animal traction. Their dwellings, household furnishings, tools and implements are not much more elaborate or varied than those of the mountain peoples. Specialization of labor by skill and region is more developed, and trade is an essential activity. There are more formal institutions to which people belong, including the political state. Indian influence is seen in religion, writing, written literature and much of its contents, linguistic borrowings, many systematic ideas about nature, models for political organization and notions about kinship.

The Burmans

The Burmans, like the other indigenous peoples, are of Southern Mongoloid ancestry. They resemble other Southern Mongoloids in physical characteristics. These include relatively short stature, light brown skin and straight or slightly wavy black hair. Southern Mongoloids generally have a finer bone structure and less pronounced eye-fold than the Mongoloid race proper.

Some anthropologists believe that the Burmans moved into northern Burma toward the middle of the first millennium of the Christian era from a center of dispersion in South China. The country's history since that time is essentially the history of Burman cultural development and expansion. As the politically and culturally dominant group, the Burmans are often emulated by the members of less advanced groups. The more superficial elements of culture, language and style of dress are usually adopted first. Most Burmans continue to wear the traditional *longyi*, a tubelike cloth garment, which is wrapped around the body and secured at the waist. Women also wear a bodice or *bawli*, but the basic *longyi* is very similar to that worn by the men.

There is a saying in the country that "to be Burman is to be Buddhist." Theravada Buddhism is accepted by all but a very few members of the Burman culture and is perhaps the key to understanding the culture (see ch. 11, Religion).

The Shans

The Shans were classed by the British as hill peoples, although they are much closer to the Burmans than to any of the true hill peoples. They grow irrigated rice as do the Burmans, have a written language and literature, and practice Buddhism. They have long been organized into states headed by hereditary princes or *saohpas*. They are, in their own estimation, closer to the Burmans than to any other ethnic group.

Two-thirds of all the Burmese Shans live in the valleys of the high Shan Plateau in the Shan state of northern Burma. Their settlements tend to be permanent, and although they vary in size, the average rice village contains from 200 to 500 individuals. The most imposing structures are usually the Buddhist temple and the headman's house, unless the village is the seat of a ruling *saohpa*, in which case his residence, or *haw* takes precedence. Almost all houses are constructed of bamboo and are raised about 8 feet above the ground on piles, a typical Tai practice.

Traditional Shan society is structured in an uncomplicated way. Above the mass of commoners (a fairly uniform class of farmers) are the *saohpas*, a class of nobility which includes both the ruling heads of state and the lesser nobility. Although theoretically there

is no intermarriage between the two classes, quite often a member of the lesser nobility will marry a commoner. Polygyny is permitted to both classes, but is common only among the *saohpa*, who prefer to have more than one wife, if possible.

The Kachins

The Kachins form the majority of the population in northern Burma's Kachin State, as well as a sizable minority in the northern Shan State. They are the most completely described ethnic minority group in Burma. Traditionally the Kachins are mountaintop dwellers and live in compact settlements surrounded by stockades. However, with the cessation of intervillage raiding and warfare, in the last few years the Kachins have begun moving down into the valleys, where they quite often share their territory with groups of Shans. These valley settlements are usually smaller in size and more dispersed than the mountain villages. Houses are large, bamboo, single-family dwellings, simply constructed and simply furnished.

Most Kachins maintain their traditional religious beliefs and practices, centering around two classes of supernatural spirits; the first are ancestral deities, and the second are believed to represent chance and general misfortune. The method for propitiating the spirits is through prayer and offerings performed at spirit shrines, both in the household and at other locations outside the village. The basis of the Kachin economy is rice farming by shifting cultivation. They carry on a small amount of trade with Shans and Burmans for necessities such as iron and salt. The Kachins have kin-based clan groups, but other formal associations are few. The local village chief (*duwa*) and his family constitute an hereditary class of nobility, and are members of one of the five noble Kachin clans. There is no intermarriage between noble clans and commoner clans. A *duwa* often has more than one wife, but for the most part, Kachins are monogamous.

The Chins

Of the country's principal ethnic groups, the Chins are the least known and the least affected by contacts with the outside world. The major concentration of Chins in Burma is in the Chin Special Division along the western border, but the Chin population also reaches across the border into northeast India and Pakistan. Other Chins are found farther south in the Arakan region, the plains east of the Special Division, and in the plains of the Middle.

Irrawaddy River

Although there is considerable heterogeneity among the Chins, it is possible to discern certain general resemblances that dis-

tinguish those living in the northern part of the Special Division (Hill Chins or northern Chins), from those living to the south of the Division (Plains Chins), who sometimes live interspersed with Burmans. Northern Chins engage in shifting cultivation but live in fairly permanent villages and construct their homes of wooden planks. They have an elaborate social organization and a more structured political system with hereditary political offices. There are a number of clans with membership gained by birth in the father's line. Clans are ranked by social status into aristocratic and common clans, the former being composed of the village headmen and their families.

Southern Chins engage in both shifting cultivation and sedentary wet-rice agriculture. Villages are far apart and less permanent than those in the north, and houses are usually built of bamboo. Clans are present, but there is no absolute ranking of them according to social status. There are no formal political offices; village affairs may be decided by an informal council of clan elders who meet from time to time. The indigenous religion of all the Chins is characterized by belief in a variety of spirits. Very few of them are Buddhists. It has been estimated that as many as 20 percent profess Christianity.

The Karens

Karens are found scattered along the lower reaches of the Irrawaddy and Sittang Rivers. Most of them live in the Karen, Kayah, and southern Shan States, extending along the eastern border of Burma in Tenasserim and into adjoining Thailand.

These Karens living in the plains of lower Burma resemble the Burmans in culture. They live in Burman-style houses, follow Buddhist beliefs and practice wet-rice agriculture. In the hill areas, Karen settlements consist of several bamboo longhouses, with each house large enough to accommodate about 20 families. Each nuclear family has its own apartment along a central corridor. The village is the highest level of social organization and is normally under the control of a headman and a council of elders. There are few formalized ways of gaining social status in the village. Wealth and age are the major determinants rather than occupation, since all of the people including the chief are farmers. Little is known about the educated Karens living in the villages and cities or the Pwo and Sgaw Karens of the plains. It can only be assumed that they are similar to comparable groups of Burmans.

The Chinese

As elsewhere in Southeast Asia, the Chinese in Burma are more prominent in trade and manufacturing than in farming. Their con-

centration in urban areas is even greater in Burma than in neighboring countries. The family, kinship groups and voluntary organizations of the Chinese in Burma are similar in many ways to their counterparts in China.

Most of the Chinese now in Burma probably have Burmese nationality and are married to Burmese women. For a number of reasons they have been more readily assimilated into the Burmese social structure than have the members of the Indian population. The majority of the Chinese who came to Burma seemed rather easily to exchange their own faith for the elements of Burmese Theravada Buddhism. Most Chinese immigrants have been men, compared to a small percentage of women. This fact, added to the absence of any serious religious barriers, has made intermarriage with Burmese women quite frequent.

Until they were abolished by the government that seized power in 1962 there were a number of Chinese schools in Burma which tended to foster a degree of ethnic unity. Otherwise the Chinese are a heterogeneous group with diverse backgrounds and social ties, a factor which may facilitate absorption into the native population of Burma.

The Indians and Pakistanis

At the time of the Japanese invasion in World War II, immigrants from the subcontinent of India and their descendents were a very important element in Burma. They formed the largest foreign minority, were prominent in certain divisions of the government administration and were important in more sections of the economy than either the British or the Chinese. Since 1941 the role of the Indian and Pakistani minority has changed considerably. The size and composition of the present Indian and Pakistani population are not accurately known.

Large-scale immigration of people from India began in the 1870's as an answer to the need for agricultural labor to support Burma's expanding rice trade. The British, eager to develop the new agricultural export potential which resulted from the opening of the Suez Canal, encouraged this immigration which continued for many years. Although many of the newcomers were seasonal farm laborers and only temporary immigrants, a large number lingered over the years and formed a settled population which became more influential in business and trade than in agriculture.

The government's nationalization of enterprises owned and controlled by foreigners deprived many of the Indian and Pakistani businessmen of their livelihood and caused them to leave Burma. A 1965 report indicated that about 90 percent of some 110,000

Indian nationals registered in Burma as foreigners recently had been repatriated to India. At the same time almost half of some 25,000 registered Pakistanis left the country. Probably very few of the Tamil moneylending caste of Chettyars, who once were prominent in the Burmese economy, remain in Burma at the present time. Most of the Gujarati merchants, who had control of some sections of the retail trade, have also gone. The Indian aliens who continue to live in Burma are probably those who have not exercised any obvious economic power, the unskilled and semi-skilled laborers and the small businessmen. Many of the dockworkers and the remaining coolie laborers in Rangoon are Oriyas and Tamils, as are most of the few remaining medical and professional men. In upper Burma, many Gujarati merchants probably retain retail stores in the larger villages. There is little information concerning the religious affiliations of these alien groups. Most of the immigrants were Hindu, except for the Bengali Moslems from what is now East Pakistan, the Malayalam Moslems from southwest India, and the Gujaratis from Surat, north of Bombay.

The Indians who were born in Burma and consider themselves Burmese nationals differ from the immigrant group in several ways. The majority are Moslems, whereas those who are foreign born are predominantly Hindu. Many of the native-born Indians are rural people and in their occupational distribution resemble the Burmese among whom they live. Few of them are found in the professions or in trade, in contrast to those who are foreign born.

Intermarriage between Indians and Burmese women has been less common than unions between the Chinese and Burmese, mainly because of religious differences. When intermarriage does occur between an Indian Moslem and a Buddhist, the children are raised as Moslems.

RELATIONS AMONG ETHNIC GROUPS

With some exceptions, the ethnic minorities live in fairly compact blocks of territory peripheral to the central area of Burman settlement, in places that are not readily accessible. Consequently, knowledge by the members of one group of other groups is based largely on hearsay or is confined to those few who have traveled and traded outside the community.

Within most of the indigenous groups, other than the Burmans, the primary loyalty is probably toward an elementary social unit, either the village or the clan, rather than toward the national state. Particularly among the Chins, Kachins and hill Karens there have been few formalized relations outside the community. Each village is a comparatively self-contained unit, suspicious or hostile toward

neighboring villages. In such areas language diversity has been most accentuated, reflecting the absence of integration beyond the local unit (see ch. 17, Political Values and Attitudes).

Even where there has been more ethnic uniformity over a considerable area, as among the Pwo and Sgaw Karens, and the Mons of Tenasserim, there is little evidence of ethnically based institutions above the local settlement. The Mons had an organized kingdom before the eighteenth century, but it has since been destroyed and as a people the Mons appear to have been largely absorbed by the Burmans.

Many of the Kachins are aware of ethnic unity, perhaps because serious dialect barriers are absent. The feeling of unity is not intense, however, and has not developed into any particular allegiance to the Kachin State. Such an awareness of kind, in fact, may be a very recent phenomenon, a product of British rule, which provided peace and order in the Kachin area, and of the Christian missionaries who brought the Kachins together in schools and provided them with a system of writing.

The Shans are more culturally advanced than the other ethnic peoples, with the exception of the Burmans, and have long had organized political states. The rule of each state is of a superficial nature, restricted largely to the collection of taxes, and probably engenders no pronounced sense of loyalty among most Shans. An individual *saohpa* with charismatic qualities may elicit a personal following among his subjects, but this would not persist beyond his death to succeeding *saohpas*. On the village level, the Shans have experienced frequent contact with other groups, both neighboring Kachins and Palaungs as well as Chinese traders, Burmans and Thais. For a long time Shan culture has exercised a notable attraction over these and other peoples who have come within their sphere of influence. In fact, the large population of Shans in Burma today results, to a great degree, from the assimilation of non-Tai groups, mostly the less advanced hill peoples. Many of the Palaungs, Kachins and Karens in eastern Burma have discarded their original customs, speech and religion, and have become like the Shans.

It has often been reported that a sense of nationality developed among the Karens during the course of the nineteenth century. Although relatively little information is available concerning this supposed trend, it is probable that a group feeling did develop among those Karens who were exposed to Christian influence and received a Western education. However, considering the fact that the majority of Karens are Buddhist and are Burman speaking, any sense of Karen nationality is likely to be restricted to a small minority of educated Christians.

The minority ethnic groups do not seem to be automatically graded by the Burmans in any sort of hierarchy of prestige or powers. The average Burman, in his relations with the other ethnic groups, is likely to accord a higher, more acceptable position to those who are Buddhist, wear Burman dress and do not possess any noticeably strange customs. Anyone who fulfills these conditions will usually be accepted as a social equal, especially if he is a Buddhist. Nevertheless, there is a widespread feeling among many of the Burmanized Shans, Karens and Kachins that the Burmans look down upon them (see ch. 12, Social Values).

The visible ill feeling which exists between the Burmans and some segments of the other ethnic groups is a byproduct of the British colonial government and the activities of the missionaries. The British fostered ethnic distinctions through their policies of indirect rule and army recruitment and tended to divide and exclude the ethnic minorities from the rest of Burma. Feelings of group distinctiveness were unwittingly intensified by the missionaries, who translated the Bible into minority languages and encouraged reading and writing in these languages. Christian churches were often set up and organized along ethnic lines.

Both government officials and missionaries, attracted by what appeared to be enthusiastic acceptance of Western culture, openly favored members of non-Burman groups, many of whom served in both the military and the police. While a number of Karens were appointed to a variety of distinguished posts, the Burmans, in contrast, were felt to be untrustworthy and consistently were placed in inferior positions.

Since Burma gained independence the country has been plagued by rebellious groups of Shans, Karens and Kachins who have resisted the idea of federation in a state dominated by Burmans. Most of the insurgents are those who gained educational and occupational status under British rule and felt that a Burman government would deprive them of their rightful place. The Burmans, for their part, seem to have been unaware of the degree to which they did not accept the non-Burman groups and of the degree to which the latter resented this lack of acceptance (see ch. 17, Political Values and Attitudes).

Discrimination, if it now exists, would appear to be informal and unorganized rather than expressed government policy. Officially, the attitude of the present Burmese Government is one of fraternal interest and guidance, emphasizing the economic and political development of each ethnic group and the abandonment of prejudice and suspicion.

Relations with the foreign ethnic groups in Burma, mostly Indians and Chinese, must be considered apart from the indigenous

peoples. The power and influence of foreign minorities, especially the Indians, has been a matter of concern to the people of Burma. The initial resentment felt toward the Indians probably stemmed from their identification with the British colonial regime in the eyes of the Burmese. Added to this were the growing Indian monopoly of certain occupational groups, their control of the rice trade and their moneylending activities, all of which heightened their unpopularity. After independence in 1948 the Burmese Government attacked Indian economic interests through systems of licensing and regulation and, finally, by nationalizing their property, forced most of them out of business. Most of those Indians who remained in Burma were probably Burmese nationals or were minor tradesmen and laborers who had never attracted particular notice or been powerful in any sense.

The Chinese community has been a more unobtrusive element in Burma's population. Definitely second to the Indians in numbers, they have largely stayed out of Burmese affairs and have not drawn unfavorable attention. Most of the Chinese were born in Burma and have made the country their permanent home, although the Burmese still regard them as foreigners and differentiate them as a group. In the Burman language, the word for Chinese is *paukpaw*, which means, roughly, birthmate.

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

The Burman language is spoken with little apparent variation in the central area of Burma—the valleys of the Sittang and Irrawaddy Rivers. The overwhelming majority of this area's inhabitants are native Burman-speakers, regardless of their ethnic affiliations. The only possible exception is in the Moulmein and Thaton districts, where Karen- and Mon-speakers may have the majority, though most learn Burman as a second language. Burman is the official language of the country, the medium of formal education and of the historic literature. It is also the second language for colloquial purposes for a large percentage of the non-Burman ethnic groups and will become increasingly important for these groups as the language of contact with the modern world and contemporary affairs (see ch. 9, Education).

Outside of central Burma, language diversity is more pronounced and tends to prolong traditional differences between groups. Among the Chins, for example, there are over a score of different languages and dialects. Observers in the Pa-o and Jinghpaw (hill Kachins) areas point out that the apparent use of a second language as the lingua franca—in a bazaar or village market, for example—is often of very limited range and depth, and

permits only limited communication. The few speakers of Burman in the towns of the minority states are most usually Shans.

True bilingualism is highest in Burma proper, where almost all native speakers of Chin, Karen, Mon and Shan languages are also able to use Burman. The only other indigenous language of significance in intergroup communication is Shan. In the Shan State over a quarter of the Kachins, who are native Jinghpaw speakers, and over half of the Mon-Khmer speakers (Palaungs) also use Shan.

There is little reliable information on the secondary use of English or Indian and Chinese languages. The ratio of those literate in English is most certainly higher in the urban areas, especially in Rangoon and Moulmein. English is taught as a foreign language in the secondary schools, but other European languages are absent. There are probably few Burmans who can speak any Indian or Chinese, and those who know another language of Southeast Asia are almost nonexistent. East of the Salween River there are a few Shans who know Thai from trading south into Thailand, or from World War II when the Shan States of Mong Pan and Kēng Tung were controlled by Thailand. Also as a result of World War II, a number of Burmese can speak Japanese to varying degrees, though few can read it.

Burman is the language of instruction and is a compulsory subject in all primary schools. The literary or written form differs considerably from the spoken language. Thus, the Burman child who learns to read does not learn what he has been talking for the previous years of his life, but he is acquiring a new form of the language which he will rarely use in speech unless he gives a formal address.

CHAPTER 6

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Some of the institutional changes that accompanied the country's development as a colonial dependency had far-reaching effects on social relationships throughout all the society. Others, such as the commercial development of ricelands in Lower Burma, appear to have mainly affected only one segment of the society. The stimulus of newly won independence and the various government policies and programs for development continued in 1967 to influence trends in social and cultural change but in no certain direction.

Despite the changes introduced by the British colonial government and the reorientation of the country as an independent nation, many features of the social structure remain much the same as they were under the Burmese kings. This is especially true in the rural communities, where most of the people live and where tradition still rules. Many of these communities are far from the urban centers where the forces of modernization are strongest.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The picture of precolonial social structure that emerges from the accounts of missionaries, officials and travelers is one of a three-class system in which heredity played an important but not exclusive part. At the top of the social order was royalty, composed of the king and his immediate family. Second was the mass of ordinary people. At the bottom was a variegated class comprised of those who followed one of several occupations held in very low regard, including jailors, executioners and gravediggers. Other members of this class were the farmers who worked the royal lands, the pagoda attendants and people who were physically deformed or incurably diseased.

The pagoda attendants were slaves, taken from the ranks of foreign prisoners of war, captured rebels and criminals. They were often segregated into slave villages and were discriminated against in other ways because they were members of the lowest social class. They were not physically confined, as slaves in other societies sometimes have been, an indication that slave status was not excessively onerous. No more pagoda slaves have been added to the membership of this group since the end of the eighteenth century.

During the colonial period descendants of pagoda attendants often found it necessary to conceal their ancestry in order to gain acceptance in higher social levels. During the past few decades these people have merged with the rest of the population with less difficulty, and today public interest in their status is slight. The same is true for the descendants of the last Burmese royal family.

There were various social gradations within the large middle class of traditional Burmese society. These gradations arose during the early settlement of the country by the ethnic Burmans who separated themselves, as conquerors, from earlier settlers, such as the Chins and Karens. The dominant Burmans were known as *ahmudan*, and the conquered people were called *athi*. The ethnic basis for this distinction gradually lessened as more Burmans settled in *athi* villages, and as the *athi* became increasingly Burmanized.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century the *ahmudan* living on royal lands near the capital were relatively few in number. They performed a number of hereditary functions in service to the kingdom. Some members of this class constituted a permanent military force and were organized into service units or regiments. The *ahmudan* regiments were noted for their colorful standards and other insignia of rank and prestige, but they were undisciplined and lacked effective weapons. They were apparently a spirited if disorganized army, preoccupied more with the pageantry and prestige of the military than with the actual preparation for combat (see ch. 26, The Armed Forces).

The *athi* villages became gradually more Burmanized until they could no longer be distinguished from the ordinary Burman farming class. In effect, the *athi* became synonymous with the Burmese peasantry, the numerically predominant lower section of the middle class in old Burmese society. These rural farming communities, largely self-contained and politically independent, gave allegiance to hereditary headmen known as *myothugyi*.

In precolonial times this village headman role appeared in its purest form in Lower Burma. Here the headman was police officer, judge, tax collector and recruiter of manpower in times of national emergency. In many respects his relationship to the villagers within his jurisdiction was similar to that of an English country squire. His popularity was determined largely by his generosity and cooperation on such occasions as weddings, feasts and various types of village undertakings. In contrast to most agents of government in old Burma, the headman derived his authority from local tradition and identified himself as the representative of village interests.

The authority of the *myothugyi* was complicated by the presence of other local headmen whose titles were also hereditary and whose jurisdiction was occupational rather than territorial. A single area might have a headman in charge of fishermen, another for boatmen and still another for salt boilers. Like the *myothugyi* each of these headmen was responsible for collecting taxes, for keeping the peace and exercising general supervision and control in his own jurisdiction, and each derived authority from the personal allegiance of those under his leadership.

The authority of the monarch was absolute, and the semifeudal administrative structure allowed governors and other appointive officials to retain unspecified amounts of tax money provided that the specified amounts were sent to the royal treasury. This feature of the traditional society was apparently more common in Upper Burma near the capital, where, at the same time, there was less abuse of the practice, since officials were subject to greater supervision in this area. In Lower Burma, where administrative controls and supervision from the capital were often weak, there were fewer officials, but the excesses of the few were likely to be greater and to continue longer without correction.

The social class system of precolonial Burma was based upon heredity to a considerable extent, though interclass marriages were not infrequent, particularly between the *admudan* and *athi* elements of the middle social level. Achievement of higher status was possible for all. Another feature of the relatively open class system was the group of officials serving the monarchy. This was not a hereditary group; its members were appointed anew by each king at the time of his accession. It was possible for individuals to rise from humble beginnings through nimble wits or good fortune to this official position, though their careers were likely to be of short duration, subject to royal whim.

The privileges and symbols of rank were numerous but were largely restricted to royalty, nobility and officialdom, and were exercised on a temporary basis subject to royal decree. Elaborate ceremony and prescribed etiquette surrounded the person of the king and reflected his omnipotency. Members of the royal family and higher officials had the privilege of traveling with an elaborate retinue and received recognition of their special status through an extensive system of sumptuary laws, which regulated the behavior of all commoners toward them. Infractions of these rules were severely punished by imprisonment, beating or, in extreme instances, death.

Despite the outward manifestations of oppression and inequality of status, the majority of the people in precolonial Burma appear to have been secure in their economic and social status, with an

egalitarian outlook on life. In general they were free of the economic insecurity and political enslavement characteristic of many Asian monarchies of that period. The absence of a rigid caste system and of a true hereditary aristocracy left open the avenues of social mobility. Status and prestige were available through membership in the Buddhist monkhood and through attainment of civil and military office. The only sharp social distinctions were those that separated the small royal elite from the mass of common people.

The great majority of the people were, as they remained in 1967, rural farmers, among whom status distinctions based on occupation, wealth and landownership had relatively little importance. The system of landownership ensured the equality of everyone in the village social structure. Equal amounts of land were owned collectively by each family in the village. The permanent transfer of land to anyone outside the family was unknown, and families continued to hold their land as long as any member cultivated it. The accumulation of excessive individual landholdings was in this manner effectively prevented.

Buddhist beliefs emphasized the worth of the individual, thus adding support to the egalitarian society. Prestige was linked to age and sex, the accumulation of learning and the distribution of wealth as an act of religious merit. Marriage was a particularly egalitarian institution, and the position of women in marriage was equal to that of men (see ch. 7, Family).

The traditional social structure had already begun to weaken when colonial rule was established early in the nineteenth century. Various policies of the colonial administration hastened the process of disintegration. The functions of the three classes of monarchic Burma were relegated to a minor role in the colonial political and administrative system. New modes of status achievement were opened, and the old Burmese pattern of personal allegiance, best illustrated by the authority of the village headman, was replaced by the functional colonial government system.

The appointment of village headmen by the colonial authorities served to break up the old system of personal authority at the community level. The effects of the new colonial administration were most apparent in the villages of Lower Burma. The loss of traditional authority symbols, accompanied by the decline in religious sanctions and other restraints on conduct, undermined the cohesion of both the family and the village. A marked decline of unified purpose and feeling of responsibility among the villagers became characteristic of Burmese behavior during the colonial era.

Occupational achievement became the vehicle for acquiring social status, particularly in urban areas. There was little oppor-

tunity for employment in the class of government officials, as there had been during the monarchy. The best positions went to the British, and the ranks of the Indian Civil Service provided personnel for the lesser posts. Burmese were eligible for administrative jobs at the local level, by appointment of the British authorities. In precolonial Burma the holders of these offices had enjoyed the prestige of a hereditary class position, whereas in the British system they were only public servants.

In the rural areas a traditional education and recognized spiritual advancement continued to be ideal criteria for increasing social status, but in urban society as it developed in the colonial era, different criteria became more important for social mobility. Wealth and possessions acquired through occupational success became the determinants of status in connection with the urban growth of business enterprise, commercial investment and increasing employment. The Burmese in the business world encountered strong competition from the industrious Indian immigrants and some of the ethnic minorities favored by the British.

RURAL SOCIETY

Burma is still basically a country of rural farming communities. Such social distinctions that exist in the equalitarian rural society are in no way tied to membership in a particular class or group but depend upon differences of individual status and prestige. The fundamental components of status and prestige in the village are age, education, length of residence, sex, spiritual advancement and, to an extent, economic success. Social etiquette demands deferential behavior toward older persons, and speech forms clearly reflect age distinctions. However, the most senior members of a community do not necessarily hold true authority and power. The village headman, often a younger and more vigorous man, has the most prestige and authority regardless of his age.

Burmese education is becoming increasingly secular, but in many rural villages the Buddhist monastery school is still the only one available (see ch. 9, Education). Traditional education has religious and moral connotations and is highly valued. Literacy in Burmese, obtained through study of Buddhist writings in the monastery school, affords the individual with a reputation for learning as well as a certain spiritual character. Many rural Burmese look upon an illiterate person as lacking in morality because of his failure to acquire education in a monastic school.

The prestige attached to a traditional Buddhist education is illustrated in the frequent public readings of religious texts to small groups of villagers by the elders. Even those villagers lacking any other basis for prestige in the community may gain recog-

nitition if they have an unusual degree of religious education or knowledge. Social advancement is becoming more dependent on secular education, but a man is still expected to complete at least one period of religious instruction, and the initiation into the monkhood is truly worthy of prestige.

Relationships in the village are close and intimate, and the personal qualities of every person the common knowledge of all. Acceptance strongly depends upon length of residence in the community. Some villages, generally in the less stable region of Lower Burma, have a rather high rate of population turnover through migration of labor into and out of the village, transfer of government personnel and so on. Under these circumstances, length of residence is an even more important determinant of status. The established residents often speak of someone who has lived in the community for 5 years or less as a newcomer.

The Burmese traditionally view the Buddhist monk as an individual living outside the normal status hierarchy as the exemplar of an ideal. Deferential speech forms used toward monks, as well as numerous other courtesies performed with regard to them, reveal the honor accorded their special status.

Also worthy of honor and regard is the meritorious man—one who is conscientiously moral in character and who pays due respect to the institutionalized forms which are recognized as being particularly instrumental in earning Buddhist merit. A pious Buddhist hopes to spend the last years of his life performing works of merit and meditating for long hours in the monastery. Such activities will bring him the admiration and respect of all his neighbors since earning religious merit is closely linked to attaining social distinction.

Wealth, in itself, counts little in status determination. However, because one gains merit and prestige through religious spending, the accumulation of money to spend becomes important. There is no greater prestige than that derived from repeatedly providing feasts for the monks, building a pagoda or a monastery. The honor conferred from such religious spending remains with the donor throughout his lifetime. In this manner, wealth alone does not indicate power and high status but becomes a powerful instrument for achieving them.

URBAN SOCIETY

The potentials for a stratified social order are more apparent in the cities. Urbanites often draw definite lines of distinction between themselves and the rural people. The feeling among many city dwellers is that rural people are slow and backward because they lack sophistication, secular education and many of the amenities of modern life.

Awareness of urban culture has begun to reach into the rural regions, especially since the introduction of government economic and social development programs. People living a considerable distance from any city are often acquainted with, and much interested in, the technological features of urban culture, such as radios, telephones and all kinds of commercially produced items. However, they tend to favor many of the traditional rural customs and behavior patterns and feel that there is no real reason to change.

In the urban setting with the continued development of commerce and industry, a system of occupation-based status and prestige has emerged. The upper social levels are composed of government, business and managerial officials and members of the professions. More recently members of the military have ascended to the upper social levels by virtue of their power in government, but because they lack the customary symbols of high status—primarily Buddhist piety and an academic education—they have not been truly accepted by the established urban elite. Instead, they form what may best be called a separate clique within the highest social levels. Below the elite are the holders of middle rank government positions, white-collar, clerical and other officeworkers. The artisans and small tradesmen follow, with wage earners next.

This structure is one of achieved statuses rather than of truly stratified classes. High status has not yet become synonymous with wealth. However, a university education, which does confer status, is usually obtained by members of the wealthier upper and middle classes. The government is apparently making an effort to expand the institutions of higher learning, with the hope of providing universal education through the college level. As a means of status achievement, open to everyone, such education would have the effect of preserving a large degree of social mobility.

Traditionally, academic learning in liberal arts, in law or in one of the other professions has been considered more important than technical training. The ambitious graduate with a liberal arts background, seeking social and material advancement, has often become a white-collar employee of the government. Frequently, such individuals have become the discontented, unemployed intellectuals, working at part-time jobs which lacked the prestige they expect as educated persons. Education is a status symbol. The emphasis placed upon scholarly titles and degrees and their frequent use in verbal address and signatures continue to illustrate the importance attached to them. There is still widespread feeling that technical training is of little value and not worthy of esteem, although this attitude is changing. The government, during the mid-1960's, was finding it necessary to emphasize the great need

for more scientists and engineers if the state were to hold its own in the modern world.

High status is still accorded, in the urban setting, to the pious or meritorious person who sponsors the building of pagodas, offers generous gifts to the monks and lavishly celebrates the *shinbyus* of his sons (see ch. 7, Family). He is often a person who supports organized charities, religious and secular alike. Quite often those who acquire Buddhist merit and social status through such traditional activities also seek such modern prestige giving possessions as fine clothes, stone or brick houses and automobiles. Too little is known about the contemporary urban structure to determine whether the newer more tangible status symbols are replacing the older ones or merely supplementing them.

The persistence of old values and status-conferring attributes, despite the policies and practices of the colonial system, indicates the strength of Burmese tradition. The new criteria of social standing exert considerable influence in the urban setting. However, rural Burma continues to embrace about 85 percent of the people; it is the traditional values and ways of this majority which give the society its dominant qualities and orientations.

ASSOCIATIONS AND GROUPS

Rural social organizations reflect traditional cultural values in both structure and function. The urban organizations which began during the colonial period were largely imitations of Western forms, except for those which were more formal and sophisticated versions of the rural organizations. Most urban social groups were organized as a part of the movement to establish Burma as a modern nation.

Burmese society, in various ways, tends to emphasize the formation of loosely structured associations rather than highly organized, closely knit, permanent groups. The average person, particularly in rural areas, does not respond readily to organized activity. Villagers rarely form permanent and highly organized groups which would tend to curtail individual autonomy. Organizations beyond the family usually are oriented toward religious ends. Associations are, to an extent, a part of traditional culture, but as these occur at the village level they are informal in nature. Membership is derived from the general expectation that all inhabitants of the village will participate in the activities of one or another of these organizations. In the cities there is a somewhat greater tendency to organize into groups for specific purposes. Urban residents, especially those with modern educational backgrounds, appear to be more willing to conform to organizational standards for the attainment of a desired goal.

Typical of Burmese associations at the village level are the various groups devoted to providing food for the Buddhist monks, maintaining the village pagodas and serving in various ways at pagoda festivals. Groups of this type are found in almost all communities and are usually composed of all unmarried young people in the village. Buddhism is the force which brings these people together and causes them to adjust and accommodate their interests so that they may work effectively as a group. The organization is rather informal, and there are few fixed rules of procedure. Members are not recruited in any formal sense, but participation is expected of all young people.

Other kinds of religious groups, such as those in which the members participate in the recitation of Buddhist scriptures on ceremonial occasions, are characteristically comprised of the older people. Organizational structure within these groups is noticeably absent, with the exception that each group has a leader chosen from among the older men. In their choice of leaders the villagers tend to prefer those with special personal abilities or powers, emphasizing age, monastic education, piety, character and authority. These religious groups exist to provide necessary services, but their primary purpose is to enable the members to acquire religious merit through the performance of good deeds.

There are few secular organizations at the village level, probably because there are no secular tasks or activities which require the formation of permanent cooperative groups. One type of secular organization, which customarily occurs, is composed of young men who act as village police, protecting the villagers from outside intruders and against fire. Membership in this group is a matter of social obligation, and those households which cannot contribute a member will substitute a gift of food as the organization makes its rounds at night. This protective group is not related to any governmental security force, although during the postindependence insurrections some of them received arms from the township police forces.

Many villages also have a number of dance teams or musical troupes, organized by the young men of the community. They provide the music and perform dances for pagoda festivals and similar celebrations. The dancers may have costumes and occasionally go to other villages for pagoda dedications and festivals.

Village associations often have a social and matrimonial, as well as a religious function. This is particularly true of those groups associated with the collection and preparation of food for the monks and those which have the responsibility of serving at religious affairs. The young men go from house to house collecting uncooked rice, and as they wait for each household's contribution

they have a chance to observe and in some cases speak with the girls of the family. At pagoda festivals and other religious celebrations, the young girls assist in the preparation of food and other services. The young men may be present during these activities and help to distribute the food, giving them another opportunity to become acquainted with the girls. Buddhist devotional groups which meet in the evenings to recite scriptures also bring young people together regularly several nights a week.

Various religious organizations for Buddhist laymen have appeared in relatively recent times. These organizations are of two kinds, those in which the primary purpose is the acquisition of merit by members and those with the goal of gaining increased insight into religious truth through meditation. Traditionally, the individual Buddhist seeks through good deeds to acquire merit for its beneficial effect upon his future existences.

In modern Burma, especially in urban surroundings, Western organizational methods have apparently had an impact on concepts of social and religious organization. One indication of this has been the formation of Buddhist lay societies, some having complex and nationwide membership. The members of these societies have sought collectively to further Buddhist goals by various means, such as sponsoring lectures on Buddhist teaching and supporting missionary activities. The most numerous of the lay societies are the smaller organizations, many of which are formed only to provide monasteries and monks with food and other necessities. Others publish minor tracts on various aspects of Buddhism as a way of gaining merit.

Interest in meditational activity has always been a part of Burmese Buddhism, though it has become popular among laymen only in modern times; societies devoted to meditation are not as numerous as the merit-seeking societies. There is no formal organization within these groups. Spiritual achievement through meditation is the primary emphasis, with each member seeking to learn the approach to meditation most suitable to himself.

Restricted mainly to the larger population centers, the Buddhist lay societies frequently reflect the new patterns of social organization which have developed as part of the process of urbanization. Many of these urban societies tend to be organized along occupational lines, with membership drawn from specialized ranks. They thus serve the additional function of developing group identification in the urban structure.

Although relative age is of great importance in determining the nature of social relationships, particularly with regard to men, there are no formal associations to which members of various age groups automatically belong. There are, however, recognized age

categories, such as those comprising young boys and girls before their initiation into adulthood (see ch. 7, Family). Those who have reached old age are also in a special category and have an honored status. In many respects, age is still a determinant of social position and of the behavior between individuals occupying these positions.

The various kinds of youth groups in modern Burma are an outgrowth of the colonial influence and urbanization and do not correspond to anything in the traditional culture. These groups are of considerable importance in contemporary social life, primarily in urban areas, and include sport clubs, reading clubs, religious groups and student unions.

Several other types of organizations have developed since the beginning of the British colonial period, many of them patterned on Western models. Among these are private social welfare organizations, women's organizations, professional societies and social clubs. The position of these societies in the contemporary urban social structure is not adequately known, nor is that of the various Chinese and Indian organizations and clubs.

CHAPTER 7

FAMILY

In general, the family pattern that predominates throughout most of the country is that of the ethnic Burmans. Many of the characteristics of this typically Burmese family life are part of a general pattern that exists throughout Southeast Asia. The only ethnic groups of any importance in the country whose family organization does not closely resemble the general Burmese pattern are the Chins and Kachins. These peoples differ in the manner of tracing descent, in the size and composition of the household or family unit and in the relative status of the sexes in marriage (see ch. 5, Ethnic Groups and Languages).

The family unit is the focus of all social life among the Burmans. The principles governing filial piety are not governed by religious precepts, but concepts of family loyalty and obligation are strong. Membership in a family involves more demands on an individual than does any other social relationship.

There is little evidence of disintegration or profound change in the basic family structure at the present time, except for the possible weakening of family ties and authority under the impact of urbanization. Rural families who move into an urban area frequently find it difficult to adapt to city life. Crowded conditions and an increase in industrial jobs may necessitate domestic adjustments. The effects of such a trend are lessened by a number of stabilizing factors in Burmese society. Buddhism provides an effective cohesive force which supports and gives meaning to the family system. There is also a conservative tendency to resist anything regarded as a foreign influence and to cherish that which is traditionally Burmese.

FAMILY STRUCTURE

With only a few exceptions among the hill peoples, most of the Burmese trace descent equally in both the father's and the mother's lines. Normally there is no difference in the relationship with relatives on either side of the family, and no distinctions are made in the terms used to refer to them. Both the maternal and the paternal grandmothers are referred to as *ahphwa*, for example, and both grandfathers are called *ahpho*. The Burmese do not take surnames

from one parental line to the exclusion of the other and, in fact, have no surnames at all, each individual's name being distinctively his own. The son of Ko Than and Ma Phwa Tin, therefore, may have the completely personal name of Aun Pe or Mya Lay, which includes none of the syllables of either parent's name. The few exceptions to this general rule occur among the Burmese Christians or strongly Westernized families who sometimes adopt one of the syllables of the father's name.

The ideal Burmese household unit consists of the father, mother and their unmarried children. In addition, there are often one or more dependent relatives: an unmarried aunt, a cousin or an aging grandparent. Newlyweds prefer to establish a separate household, but it is not always possible for them to do so, for financial reasons or otherwise. When newly married couples are unable to set up their own separate residence they normally live temporarily with the parents of either the husband or the wife. Usually, it is the wife's family that assumes this responsibility, along with arranging the wedding celebration and providing a nuptial chamber for the couple. Despite this irregularity a permanent home is established, irrespective of the location of either the husband's or the wife's family.

The fact that the Burmese prefer to live in small family units rather than in an extended family group does not imply that close relationships with other relatives are thereby impaired. A large proportion of rural marriages are contracted within the local village, and even when intervillage marriages occur the new couple usually lives in the community of either the husband or the wife. As a result, most rural villages are highly ingrown communities with many of the residents interrelated through common descent or through the ties of marriage. The frequency of social contacts among relatives is great despite the existence of separate households. The web of family relationships helps to organize village life and governs, to a considerable degree, the behavior and motivation of individuals.

The enduring quality of the wider kinship bond is most effectively demonstrated in the urban setting, where greater wealth may possibly be accumulated by an upwardly mobile family unit. When such a family becomes financially dominant, it is certain to find that distantly related kin who have been less fortunate will claim a degree of assistance as their traditional right. Quite often, these less affluent relatives are taken into the household and assume the position of a higher status servant. They do not regard or address their benefactors as Master or Mistress but maintain the kinship basis of their relationship by using some respectful title,

such as those which are used for elder aunts and uncles. The obligation to help one's relatives is a traditional part of the family system and is reinforced by the teachings of Buddha. In the Mangala Sutta, the Buddhist beatitudes, the helping of relatives is included among the highest blessings in life.

All interaction within the family is governed by the principle of relative age, with the elder person in any situation receiving deference. This principle and the behavior relating to it are learned in the family context and later are extended to all social interaction. The detailed recognition of age differences is apparent in the kinship terminology. The child learns to distinguish between his eldest, next eldest and youngest relatives in each generation and refers to each by specific titles which are indicative of age and status.

In the larger social context the same salutatory titles are used in dealing with unrelated individuals, illustrating the influence of the family relationship. These titles are status graded with an implied age distinction and are cast in terms of family relationships. The term, "U," as in U Nu, for example, is used to refer to anyone of high social position and greater seniority, and translates as uncle. "Ko" (elder brother) carries less prestige and is a favorite term used among equals, particularly young people. The term "Maung" (younger brother) implies lesser status and is reserved chiefly for boys and very young men.

Similar distinctions are made among women, with the term "Daw" used toward an aunt, within the family, and also toward any female of greater age and social position in the larger social context. "Ma" (sister) is used for any woman who is younger or of equal age and therefore of lesser or equal status.

An individual's name usually remains the same as he progresses through life, but he normally acquires new titles. These are regarded primarily as titles of address or reference but not of self-identification. Social modesty sometimes forces a person of senior age and status to refer to himself by the euphemistic Maung, even when he is referred to and addressed by others as U. U Nu, for example, signed all public statements and official papers with the more humble title, Maung Nu.

The use of distinctive titles is only one aspect of the differential treatment accorded the elder in all social contexts. Most customary rules of etiquette are based upon the respectful attitude demanded of the youngest person. In the family such deference must be accorded to the members of senior generations and also the earlier born members of one's own generation. The elder expects and receives the first choice in food at mealtimes, the highest and the best seat at family gatherings and precedence in order of procession at

ceremonial functions. In return for such status recognition he assumes compensatory social responsibilities.

An impoverished younger brother, in the absence of a more senior relative, will turn to his eldest brother for aid with the assurance that his support will be forthcoming if the means for providing it are available. Similarly, the elder relatives will be expected to furnish helpful advice concerning business opportunities and to give assistance in meeting competition.

On formal occasions, such as Thingyan, the annual New Year Water Festival, customary ritual dramatically symbolizes age-status differences. At such important ceremonies as the *shinbyu*, the ritual ordination of Buddhist novices, and the *natwin*, the girl's ear-piercing ceremony, reverence for the elders is expressed by the principal participants, usually in the form of prostration at their feet (see ch. 11, Religion).

Burmese women have almost equal status with men. In daily life the woman's role is of equal importance with that of her husband. Women share in decisionmaking, have equal property rights after marriage and may engage equally in trade or other economic activity. Either a man or a woman may initiate divorce. The non-restrictive structure of the family household, its independent location and the division of equally gainful labor between the sexes have traditionally aided the mobility of women and their occupational pursuits outside the home.

Observers writing during the British colonial period often commented on the dominance of women in the retail trade and the shrewdness and intelligence of the Burmese businesswoman. Women in rural families frequently have a subsidiary means of making money, perhaps by selling vegetables from their gardens or by making and marketing cheroots. The actual income from such activities usually is not significant and is secondary to the principal economic activity, which is agriculture. Women occasionally develop large holdings at their own initiative and contribute substantially to the family welfare. When this occurs it is usually in an urban situation, where women are free from agricultural duties.

Both the husband and the wife are protected by the Burmese *dhammathats* (customary laws), concerning the acquisition, retention and disposition of property. Property that belonged to either party before the marriage or was gained specifically by either during the marriage remains the property of the individual. In the event of divorce such property is retained by each party. Property acquired by a married couple jointly during the course of their marriage is jointly shared. As the code indicates, a woman has legal rights fully equal to those of her husband.

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

Strong kinship ties plus the respect and obedience which is owed to parents and others of senior family status necessarily have an influence upon the selection of a marriage partner. However, personal preference is the chief factor in choosing a wife or husband. The nature of the marital relationship within the family is not compatible with the selection of spouses by third parties, no matter how sympathetic their intent.

A fairly conventional pattern of courtship, beginning when the girl is 17 or older, is the usual prologue to marriage. Love, based on physical attraction and compatibility, is of great importance to the youth of Burmese society and is a normal part of courtship.

Courtship is not formalized, and premarital romance may begin in a number of socially acceptable ways. Groups of young people meet at the bazaar, at theatrical performances and at the festivals which accompany many religious observances. All of these present opportunities for becoming acquainted. Stimulated interest in a girl may lead first to evening visits from the young man in the company of his friends. As his interest increases he may call alone, though he is always aware that the girl's relatives are nearby. Except in some very cosmopolitan circles in urban areas it is considered highly improper for a young couple to go anywhere alone together, no matter how serious their relationship. Dating in the Western sense is not accepted, although a boy and girl may meet in the company of a group of friends or family members without fear of reproach.

If a serious interest is maintained, the family of the suitor will establish contact with the girl's family when they become aware or are informed by the boy of his wish to marry. In the village situation the two families are usually well known to each other, and the contacts and arrangements necessary for marriage are easily made, providing the engagement is suitable to both families. In urban surroundings, or when the two people concerned live in separate villages, a formal go-between may be engaged to make the appropriate overtures to the girl's family. Formally arranged marriages are not uncommon among families of high social position who desire a match advantageous to their wealth and status. Even under these circumstances the feelings and wishes of prospective partners are not disregarded.

In all marriage preparations it is essential that the horoscopes of the intended bride and groom match one another in a favorable manner. If a family has definite objections to the marriage they may be effectively voiced with reference to disharmony of horoscopes. It is common practice for the villager to take his horoscope

information to the local astrologer, who will determine the best time for him to marry.

When a family objects to the marriage, or if a formal wedding is economically impossible, the couple may resort to elopement, a well established cultural tradition. The elopement may take the form of a theatrically staged abduction in which the young man comes with a few friends and carries the girl away with him. Such theatricality lends a touch of virtue to the girl's position and may actually save her reputation if the elopement should fail for some reason.

A second type of elopement, which has recently become common in Lower Burma, involves only the legal registration of marriage without the celebration and participation of family and friends. If the elopement is successful a period of from 7 days to a year goes by, during which the parents recover from their real or simulated distress. In most cases parental approval is eventually given, and the marriage may be solemnized in the usual manner.

A marriage ceremony is not essential, but it has become customary to invite an assembly of elders and friends and provide some type of entertainment as evidence of the wedding. Marriage is not regarded as a religious act and does not require the presence of a Buddhist monk to sanctify the ceremony. It is necessary to legalize the marriage by registering with the civil authorities. Traditionally, however, regular and recognized cohabitation was sufficient to signify a marriage.

The actual wedding ceremony follows no set pattern but is usually marked by some simple ritual performed in the bride's home. Often this takes the form of an elder or a respected relative joining the hands of the couple and perhaps giving them bits of food, which they feed one another. The parents and elders may recite some words of advice on married life, after which the couple makes an obeisance before them and the ceremony is concluded. Among the wealthy a more formal ceremony may take place, after which there is elaborate feasting and entertainment of the invited guests. This type of celebration, established in former times by Burmese royalty, is derived from India and the Hinduized countries of Southeast Asia.

There is no important gain in rights or status through marriage, and none is lost through divorce. Unmarried individuals are fully integrated functioning members of society and are not considered strange or unusual in any way.

FAMILY LIFE

Ideally, marriage, including the raising of a family, is a partnership of a man and a woman based on compassionate mutual respect.

Officially, the husband is the head of the family and carries on the family's affairs in his name. The wife is entitled to an equal share in the rewards and benefits of the partnership and may, on occasion, assume full family responsibilities and capably serve as her husband's representative in business matters.

Polygyny, marriage to more than one wife at a time, is permitted, and the status of plural wives is fully recognized, legally and morally under certain conditions. Normally, the first wife must give her consent to her husband's second marriage and may divorce him if he takes another wife without her permission. The exceptional cases when she cannot object to such a second marriage occur when she has produced no children in 8 years of married life, has produced eight daughters and no sons or has some type of severe disability. Polygynous marriage is rare because it is not economically possible for most men and also because popular sentiment in many areas is against the practice.

The relative equality in family status accorded the Burmese woman does not indicate that she and her husband play identical roles. Clear distinctions are maintained between the standards of behavior for men and those for women. The basis for this differentiation is found in the Buddhist belief that men are of a spiritually higher order than women. Men are believed to have an innate quality of spiritual glory called *pon*. The idea of *pon* affects all interaction between men and women, especially between a husband and wife. The man holds a precious essence which both the husband and his wife must guard, preserve and extend.

A woman must defer to her husband in public and refrain from certain feminine acts which may diminish or endanger male *pon*. She must be careful not to touch her husband's head or to allow her lower garments to touch his bed or personal belongings. On no occasion is she to stand or sit at a level higher than that of her husband. To fail in the observation of any of these taboos could seriously damage his *pon*. The spiritual superiority of men does not affect the rights of women as social equals in ordinary daily family activity.

There is a division of gainful labor according to sex which is most noticeable among farm families. Women are responsible for transplanting the rice seedlings, and men do the plowing and reaping. The two functions normally are never exchanged. Differentiation between the sexes also occurs in the double standard of sex morality, which is more tolerant of a husband's extramarital affairs than it is of an erring wife.

Family life in the typical household is extremely close, in the psychological sense and in the actual physical closeness of family members within the home. Most houses are small and have no more

rooms than are necessary for the basic activities of sitting, eating and sleeping. The whole family is necessarily in close proximity a great deal of the time. Most social functions are attended by the family as a group, and children are always taken when parents visit a pagoda or take a short journey.

There is no preferred number of children, and no apparent effort is made to limit the size of the family through birth control or abortion. Children are raised in a permissive, indulgent and relatively unprogrammed manner. The permissiveness of the child-rearing system extends to weaning, toilet training and all aspects of the socialization process. Parents and elders express an attitude of tolerance toward the child, and physical punishment is infrequent and mild when it is used. Most often, punishment consists of withholding privileges from the child or threatening him with punishment by the soul-stealing *nats*, ogres and witches.

An extremely close physical relationship between mother and child continues throughout the first 2 years and is rarely broken before the birth of another child. During infancy the mother is never far from her child and carries him straddled on her hip as she performs her daily routine, rarely putting him down for more than a moment. The nursing situation is quite casual, and infants are nursed whenever they seem hungry. Weaning and toilet training are accomplished gradually and without strict discipline.

As the child grows older the early physical dependence on the mother lessens as responsibility for the child is assumed by an elder sister, a cousin or an adopted older child. This child nurse becomes a mother substitute, constantly attending the child throughout the day and admonishing him for improper behavior. The feeling of trust and reliance which the child has for his immediate family is later extended to a fairly wide circle of kinsmen, both male and female. The generalization of these attitudes to other adults is evident in the ease with which children are adopted into other nuclear families. This custom, which is a distinctive feature of the family system, is accompanied by a minimum of psychological disturbance either to the child or to the adopting family.

Children are valued for the contribution they can make to the family economy, especially in rural areas where children of both sexes help with cattle tending and rice winnowing. Male children are particularly valued from a religious standpoint, because their eventual initiation into the monkhood will bring religious merit to the parents (see ch. 11, Religion). They are normally shown no more affection or appreciation than girls, however.

Except for a degree of participation in the family's economic life and the teaching of a few basic values, children enjoy a great deal of freedom until they are of school age. They are then con-

sidered capable of understanding the moral teachings of Buddhism and are expected to learn them. Traditionally, the boy of about 3 years was taken to the local monastery school, where, over a period of years, he learned to read and write and to recite the Buddhist scripture under the supervision and stern discipline of the monks. Many of these schools are still functioning, but in the mid-1960's their place was being supplemented by secular school systems (see ch. 9, Education).

Within the family circle one of the few demands that is made of the child is that he learn the proper forms of respect for his parents and elders. The same forms of respectful behavior will be applied later in the greater social context to any person of greater status. This behavior includes speaking and acting quietly in the presence of elders, speaking only when addressed, obeying parents without question and lowering the head when walking before them. To hold the head erect is to feel no restraint, to assert one's autonomy. In his elders' presence the child is expected to lower his head as a sign of his submissiveness. If he were to walk upright, he would be considered defiant and disrespectful.

The *shikko*, the act of touching one's head to the floor before an honored person, is an even stronger gesture of submission. The practice is now becoming less prevalent. Traditionally, children were expected to *shikko* their parents before bedtime and on a number of ceremonial occasions after they had reached adulthood. Even greater than the respect the child is taught to exhibit toward his elders is that which he must show toward religious objects and persons, such as statues of Buddha, Buddhist altars, monks and nuns. The Buddhist scriptures state that Buddha, the *dhamma-thats*, monks, parents and teachers, in descending order, are worthy of the respect of all men (see ch. 12, Social Values).

Children learn the proper patterns of respectful behavior by observing their parents' example, as well as by formal instruction, and by the time they are adults such patterns are deeply ingrained. One of the most important values instilled in children from their earliest years is the concept of modesty, which prohibits any exposure of the body in the presence of others, whether or not they are of the same sex. Very young babies may be allowed to go unclothed until they are able to walk. Thereafter they are impressed, by physical punishment, if necessary, with the importance of keeping the body covered at all times.

Sex role identification may be established when the child is quite young, though there is considerable variation in this. Hair styles for small boys and girls, even of school age, are often the same, with both having tiered bangs. In rural families economically responsible behavior is probably the most common factor in sex identification. Girls of 4 or 5 years begin assisting their mothers

with household tasks, and when slightly older they often are put in charge of younger brothers and sisters.

Boys of similar age may be delegated to care for the cattle and bring them in from the fields. At 10 or 11 years they are often considered ready to assist their fathers in cultivating and harvesting crops. The greatest pressure toward sex role identification comes from outside the permissive family circle, in the form of schooling and in the series of important ritual functions which confirm the status of the individual in society.

There are conflicting data concerning the lines of authority within the family, the relative positions of husband and wife and their respective roles in the matter of disciplining and training children. Any generalizations based on these data are tentative. It appears that the family structure emphasizes the mother more than the father, and that children, especially during the preadolescent years, look to the mother as the main source of authority. She is free to chastise her sons equally with her daughters, though she must take care not to insult their manhood in the manner of doing it. The father is the chief provider, and although his relationship with his children is less intimate than that of the mother, he appears to exercise a higher authority than she and assumes the role of disciplinarian when needed. The mother-son and mother-daughter relationships stand out more clearly than the comparable relationships of the father to his children. Mothers and daughters spend a great deal of time together, with the girl under the mother's constant guidance and supervision. As a result, the bond between them is extremely close, and the girl retains an allegiance to her mother which is never broken.

The mother-son relationship is also a close and indulgent one; the father seems to be primarily another adult to whom the son must show proper, respectful behavior. Not until the boy reaches adolescence does the father's role become more specific, when he may assume the position of adviser or counselor to his son. The father is the parent who is mainly responsible for teaching his children the five Buddhist precepts of morality, which prohibit the taking of life, telling a lie, stealing, engaging in sexual misconduct and clouding the mind with intoxicants.

Membership in the family places the individual in a network of social relationships with kinsmen. The personal circumstances of each family determines the kind of relationship with the larger group of kinsmen. Although kinship ties are not determinants of social interaction, it is within this group that most frequent and important interaction takes place. The child, therefore, learns the names of a large number of relatives with whom he stands in a definite relationship of one kind or another. The child's relative

age defines his position within the family and in society, and determines how he should behave toward others and how he may expect them to behave toward him.

In addition to its function in providing a network of social relationships among kinsmen, the family also sponsors a series of ceremonies and occasions which mark the progress of its members from infancy to adulthood and tend to place them within the context of the larger community. Among the first of such occasions is the naming of the child, which is usually accompanied by a small feast for relatives and friends of the family.

The child's name is chosen with care because of the belief that one's name can influence the course of later life. Personal names, which usually consist of monosyllables, are chosen with reference to a tradition which relates letters of the Burmese alphabet to a particular day of the week. Letters which correspond to the day of the child's birth are considered in choosing the first syllables of the name. The second part of the name often begins with a letter corresponding to a particular day which is astrologically congenial to the day of birth. The syllables chosen for boys' names usually denote masculine qualities, such as strength or bravery; names chosen for girls more often denote grace, beauty or tenderness. A son is never given the name of his father, since to do so would be extremely disrespectful. Because of the significance attached to a person's name, it can readily be changed if the individual feels that for some reason his name is unlucky.

Boys are considered to have reached adulthood when they are physiologically mature at about 12 or 13 years. The important change in status is marked by *shinbyu*, a public ceremony sponsored by the boy's family. It is primarily a religious ceremony, symbolizing Buddha's renunciation of worldly pleasures, and signifies the initiation of a boy into the Buddhist monkhood. It is an extremely important occasion for the family of the boy, as well as for the boy himself.

The sponsoring of a *shinbyu* provides the average family, particularly the father, with his greatest opportunity to acquire religious merit through a public display of giving. At the same time it increases his prestige and popularity among the members of the community. Most fathers, therefore, look forward to this occasion and save all the money they can, only to give it all away in a lavish display of gifts and feasting. The *shinbyu* is believed to be essential to a boy's social and spiritual well-being and is the first duty of parents to their sons. Several boys of about the same age commonly are initiated at the same ceremony. Traditionally, the *shinbyu* was preceded by a period of years in which the boy attended the monastery school, but this is no longer the standard pattern.

Details of the *shinbyu* vary in different parts of the country, but its basic features are always the same. The initiates are elaborately dressed and are taken to the monastery grounds, where a large feast is shared by as many as 300 invited guests and relatives. The central part of the ceremony is the ritual acceptance of initiates into the monkhood by the officiating monk. After this the boys allow their heads to be shaved, and they don the yellow robes worn by the Buddhist monks.

Today, most boys initiated in this manner spend only a token period of a few days in the monastery, but in former years it was not uncommon for an initiate to spend several months or several years there. The austere atmosphere of monastery life is a decided contrast to the relatively undemanding life of most boys, and they are usually happy to return to the mild discipline of their parents.

Traditional Burmese culture makes no provision for the religious initiation of girls. There is, however, a public ear-boring ceremony, the *natwin*, which marks their entrance into adulthood and their eligibility to receive suitors. The girl's family arranges for the ceremony and pays the costs of the food and gifts which are distributed to the invited guests. The *natwin* is performed in most rural villages but apparently is not as universal as the boys' *shinbyu*. In some urban areas it has become fashionable to hold festive and elaborate *natwin* ceremonies, rivaling the *shinbyu* in the degree of preparation and expense involved.

Each time a Burmese experiences a socially recognized change in status, birth, the choice of a name, initiation into adulthood, marriage and death, participation is required by the family. Even in the relatively informal marriage ceremony the change in status is signaled by the invitation of relatives and friends into the bride's home. The families of the couple participate in the expenditure of money for food, gifts and entertainment. When death occurs the members of the family make all the necessary preparations for burial and the funeral ceremony.

Among wealthier families a costly and elaborate procession is arranged and accompanies the body to the cemetery. A minimum of expense is incurred by less fortunate families, whose relatives and friends often help with gifts of money and food. Seven days after the burial the family sponsors a final ceremony which banishes the influences of death from the community. Buddhist monks are summoned and asked to perform rituals which will ensure the safe transfer of the soul into the next existence. The family is the chief participating unit in the funeral ceremony and provides a feast and gifts for invited guests, sometimes extending this hospitality over most of the interval between burial and the funeral.

CHAPTER 8

LIVING CONDITIONS

Living conditions during the mid-1960's reflected the transitional nature of a society which persistently held to its traditional values as it strove to adapt to the new socialist philosophy expressed as the Burmese Way to Socialism by the country's leaders. Direct foreign influences had been largely eliminated, and the country's political and economic systems were being radically altered by a revolutionary government with virtually absolute power. So much of the older way of life remained the same, however, that the course of change seemed less a socialist revolution than an evolutionary process in which the new overlaid rather than replaced the old.

The health situation throughout both rural and urban areas in the mid-1960's left much to be desired. The British brought modern medicine to the country, and by World War II medical services were well established according to the pattern of the British National Health Services. The services, however, collapsed completely during World War II and the Japanese occupation. After independence the government of Burma, beset by serious political disturbances, was hardly able to restore the services, or expand and improve them as was the aim. By 1967 much had been accomplished, but there was still a great lack of facilities; professional staff, sanitation and public hygiene were inadequate by modern standards; and there was a correspondingly high incidence of disease and mortality.

The concept of a welfare state is alien to the traditional political and economic patterns of the country. The leaders who guided Burma to independence in 1948, however, were familiar with the state socialism and welfare programs of Europe and wanted to adapt them to the particular needs of their own country. Since independence all the governments of Burma have considered the state primarily responsible for the well-being of its people. The government attempted in 1952 to muster wide public support of comprehensive social and economic development programs through what was known as the Pyidawtha Plan (see ch. 18, Character and Structure of the Economy).

Since it came to power in 1962 the Ne Win government has stressed the need for social reform and development to promote

the public welfare. It has proclaimed its commitment to building what it has described as "a society of affluence and social justice, free from haunting anxieties for food, clothing and shelter." Although handicapped by lack of funds and by inexperience, the government in 1967 was engaged in a number of public health, housing and community development programs.

HEALTH AND SANITATION

Vital statistics available in the mid-1960's are based on incomplete coverage. The reporting and registration of births, deaths and diseases have been carried on only in the larger towns and cities, representing less than 10 percent of the population. The size of the population is only an estimate, based on an assumed rate of growth.

For 1965 the recorded crude birth rate, as reported by the United Nations, was 44.8 per 1,000 of the officially estimated population. The recorded crude death rate was 17.9 per 1,000. Infant mortality was 114.5 per 1,000 recorded live births. Life expectancy at birth was estimated for 1960 as 40.8 years for males and 43.8 years for females.

Poor sanitation throughout the country is the main environmental factor affecting the country's level of health. Its bad effects are made worse by the tropical climate, that favors insect and waterborne vectors of disease, and the capacity of disease organisms to survive outside the human host. Improper disposal of human wastes results in a major public health problem. Practically all of the water supply is polluted. There is virtually no modern food sanitation.

These conditions do not appear to stem from any general uncleanliness of the people but from failure to recognize causative factors and relate them to the spread of disease, or from the conflict of traditional, religious and modern scientific concepts. Public opinion, for example, is generally hostile to the idea of preventive sanitation when it involves the destruction of living creatures. The people as a whole, however, accept Western curative medicine without question.

Belief is widespread among the less educated that many physical ailments and deaths are caused by supernatural forces. The protection of charms and amulets is valued, and some of the hill peoples regard cabalistic tattooing as a safeguard to health. When such devices fail to ward off disease or injury, the sufferer may resort to traditional therapy, much of which is rational and effective. There are home remedies, made from local materials and generally known, that are used for minor conditions recognized as requiring curative treatment.

In more serious cases the people may go to a traditional medical practitioner (*se saya*), either by preference or because modern Western-type medical care is not readily available. The traditional healers have varied procedures, including casting a patient's horoscope to assist in the diagnosis. There are also treatments involving massage and the internal and external use of medicinal preparations derived from herbs, roots and minerals. Those who specialize in massage and herbal remedies are required to be registered with the government.

Malaria was long considered the country's most serious disease problem because of its high incidence rate and debilitating effect on many people. Eradication programs dating from the mid-1950's were not entirely successful; however, they resulted in a measure of control and reduced the rate of transmission in some areas. High rates tend to recur if control measures are slackened. Incidence is greatest in the Shan Plateau, the Chin Hills and other hilly regions. Along the coast the infection rates are generally lower. Control measures in the central plains were reported to be effective in 1966. Other diseases transmitted by mosquitoes include dengue fever and filariasis. No yellow fever has been reported.

Acute respiratory diseases are common, and their incidence increases seasonally with the onset of cool weather in October. Influenza and pneumonia, in particular, are major causes of death, and pulmonary tuberculosis is a great problem. Few fatalities have been reported from it, but in 1956 there were an estimated 3 million active cases. There are tuberculosis clinics in Rangoon and Mandalay, but hospital facilities for the isolation of patients are far from adequate. In early 1967 the government was drawing up a 5-year plan to combat the disease.

Leprosy was a major threat during the early 1960's; the World Health Organization of the United Nations was assisting in a program for its control. The overall incidence was believed to be about 10 per 1,000 persons, but the disease was more prevalent in the drier regions and among children. In the mid-1960's there were some 20 leprosy treatment centers with a capacity of over 3,500 patients. The largest was Leprosy Village at Kengtung in Shan State. Syphilis and gonorrhea are the principal venereal diseases, but other types occur in considerable numbers. Smallpox is prevalent, but it is not a major killer. It last reached epidemic proportions in 1960. A countrywide vaccination program was accelerated in 1966.

Water pollution and an abundance of house flies contribute to a heavy incidence of enteric diseases, including typhoid fever, amoebic and bacillary dysentery and diarrhea. There are frequent epidemics of cholera usually beginning toward the start of the

monsoon and spreading northward from endemic foci in the Irrawaddy Delta and at the mouth of the Salween River. Each year several hundred thousand vaccinations are given in an attempt to control cholera.

Plague occurs as an endemic product of the rat flea vector, but the number of cases reported was decreasing during the 1960's. Rickettsial bush or scrub typhus is widely distributed and is the most common form of typhus encountered. Yaws occurs in several regions, including the vicinity of Mandalay, and trachoma is quite prevalent, especially in the towns of the Irrawaddy Delta. Animal diseases, such as rabies, anthrax and brucellosis, may infect humans and sometimes may be fatal to them.

HEALTH SERVICES

During the colonial period and the early years of independence, public health facilities and services were administered by the local authorities with the aid of subsidies from the central government. These services were free except that payment was required for private rooms in the government hospitals. There were a number of well-equipped Christian missionary hospitals in the country, and the Hindu Ramakrishna Mission Hospital was in Rangoon. In 1953 public health administration was reorganized, and the state hospitals managed by local authorities were put under direct control of the central government. All the missionary hospitals were taken over in 1965 and absorbed into the public health system.

In 1966 the government's health services and programs were centrally administered under the Ministry of Health. A director of health services was responsible for the planning and operations and was assisted by four deputy directors in charge of public health, hospitals and dispensaries, maternal and child health, and laboratories. The National Health Council assisted the Ministry in an advisory capacity. The organization of the health services paralleled the organization of the country's administrative divisions, with the township medical officers responsible for activities in the villages and hamlets.

In 1966 the country had about 300 hospitals with a total 16,000-bed normal capacity. Many of the hospitals were in need of maintenance and modernization, and some were housed in rented buildings constructed for other purposes. About 60 clinics in the main cities and towns furnished specialized outpatient care. Rangoon General Hospital, with over 800 beds, was the largest and best equipped in the country. In addition to medical and surgical wards it had tuberculosis, pediatric, orthopedic, cobalt radiation and other specialized units. Important installations in Rangoon included the modern and newly nationalized Hindu Ramakrishna

Mission Hospital, the Dufferin Hospital, specializing in obstetrics and gynecology, and the 300- to 400-bed Contagious Disease Hospital. There was also a hospital for mental patients, which was partially supported by the World Health Organization.

Mandalay, Moulmein, Bassein and Taunggyi had hospitals of 200-bed capacity or more. Taunggyi was the site of an older civil hospital and the new and well-equipped Sao San Htun Hospital of 200 beds, completed in 1961 as a gift from the Soviet Union. The American Medical Center, with a 250-bed hospital at Namkhan in Shan State, was established by Dr. Gordon Seagrave, who gained fame as the "Burma Surgeon." Nationalized in 1965, it was one of the largest facilities serving primarily the rural people. Only a few of the larger, more modern hospitals had food service. In most hospitals the families of the patients provided their food.

In the mid-1960's there were about a dozen urban health centers providing outpatient services. Five were in Rangoon, and the remainder were in Mandalay, Moulmein and Bassein. To meet the needs of the rural areas a project was begun in 1954 to establish 800 rural health centers. By 1966 about 600 were in operation. Each had a scheduled complement of a public health assistant, a vaccinator, a visiting nurse and several midwives and was responsible for areas covering about 15 village tracts with populations ranging between 15,000 and 40,000. The senior staff member, the public health assistant, received quasi-medical training in Rangoon and was supplied with a kit containing drugs selected as the most needed in his region. He was expected to diagnose ordinary ailments, perform simple surgical operations, teach hygiene and sanitation and generally supervise the health and sanitary practices in the area. In addition to operating his village dispensary, the health assistant toured the countryside as time permitted. Treatment was given to villagers for the cost of any required medicine.

A plan for the reorganization of medical laboratory services was developed by the Ministry of Health in 1964. This called for the Pasteur Institute, a private establishment in operation since 1915 and nationalized as the National Health Laboratory, to become the center for all public health laboratory services in the country. The Harcourt Butler Institute, a health laboratory and teaching center for auxiliary public health personnel, was renamed the Burma Research Medical Institute and given the assignment of coordinating medical research programs. The Burma Pharmaceutical Institute, in operation since 1955, is the country's only commercial producer of vaccines and biologicals. In general, by United States standards, pharmaceuticals are in very limited supply even in Rangoon.

In 1965 Burma ranked tenth among 17 East Asian countries rated by the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, an organ of the United Nations, in numbers of physicians and dentists per 100,000 of population. The country had about 1,800 physicians and surgeons, most of whom held a bachelor of medicine or bachelor of surgery degree acceptable to the United Kingdom's Medical Register. Several hundred, however, were licensed medical practitioners with 10 years of general education and 4 years of vocational study. These represented students who could not qualify fully for admission to the universities.

About half of the country's doctors were practicing in Rangoon and Mandalay. Many of the remainder were in the larger towns, such as Moulmein, Bassein and Taunggyi, so there were few fully qualified doctors to serve rural areas. The villagers had to travel to the urban centers for modern medical care or depend on the partially trained medical assistants at the rural health centers or the traditional medical men. To alleviate this situation, a great many more doctors were needed. At the end of 1966 the country's medical schools were educating 150 new doctors annually and expected to increase the annual output to 380 by 1970.

The principal sources of physicians and surgeons are the medical institutes in Rangoon and Mandalay and a new medical school at Mindalagon, a suburb of Rangoon, installed with the help of the World Health Organization. How to carry out a program of internship is an acute problem because of a lack of teaching hospitals. In 1965 the only recognized establishments were the General Hospitals in Rangoon and Mandalay. There were plans to upgrade the Bassein and Moulmein hospitals, to create a second teaching institution in Mandalay and to establish teaching units in Maymyo and Taunggyi.

Since most of the professional medical care during the colonial period was provided by foreign doctors, the early days of independence found the country with few physicians who were citizens of the country. For some years it was necessary to recruit medical personnel from abroad. Between 1952 and 1962 over 200 doctors were borrowed from India to fill positions in the National Health Service. In 1963, however, over one-third of the Service positions remained vacant, and, at the end of that year, most permits for foreign doctors to engage in private practice were withdrawn. Only those serving in free dispensaries, clinics and hospitals and those who had completed 15 years of practice under the government were permitted to continue.

The virtual exclusion of aliens from private medical practice was accompanied by a program for enrolling Burmese doctors for a minimum of 2 years of national service in either the military or

the civilian medical services. In April 1963 the first 50 were drafted, and the results were soon evident. Whereas the number of doctors in private practice was twice that of doctors in government service before the enrollment program, the proportion was reversed by 1965. By 1967 only about 300 doctors remained in private practice. There were virtually no dentists practicing in the country during the mid-1960's. Only one dentist, in Rangoon, was reported to have fully modern equipment.

There are no pharmacists qualified by European standards, and there is no school of pharmacy, but training in the mixing of drugs is given by a number of district hospitals. Rangoon General Hospital trains about six medical laboratory assistants twice a year, and the National Health Laboratory sometimes trains laboratory technicians. In 1965 there were about 2,800 nurses, but fewer than 400 had completed study in modern schools, and most of these were assigned to the larger urban hospitals. There were also about 4,500 midwives, but only 800 were qualified by modern standards, and most of these were also in urban centers. Schools for nurses are conducted at six government hospitals, by one state training school and at two nongovernment hospitals.

WELFARE

Until the British established their rule, social problems were dealt with in an individual or local manner, and concern over social welfare seldom reached beyond the confines of the village. Economic development under the British resulted in profound social changes. The village became much less important as a functional unit, and the religious orders lost much of their organization and standing. Meanwhile, urban communities were growing and developing their own welfare problems.

The colonial authorities, to cope with these conditions, introduced new methods, mainly with regard to health and education. As public awareness of welfare problems increased, particularly after 1900, such private organizations as the Young Men's Buddhist Association were formed. These activities, for the most part, did not reach beyond the towns.

After achieving independence in 1948 the country's leaders showed an increasing awareness of the role social welfare might play in the country. Domestic unrest, however, prevented much being done until the Pyidawtha conference of 1952. The conference resulted in the adoption of a social and economic development plan which, among other things, established a number of programs dealing with problems of health, housing and rural community development.

These programs were met with initial enthusiasm and had some success but fell generally short of their goals because of political uncertainties and the inexperience of planners and administrators throughout the government structure. After General Ne Win came to power in 1962, all development plans were reviewed. Many programs and targets, including some for social welfare, were retained, but integrated development planning was shelved.

During the 1950's the government received considerable technical and financial aid from foreign sources for its social welfare programs. Since 1962, however, the Ne Win government has progressively restricted such aid not only from official but also from private sources, including the Ford Foundation and the British Council grants. The aim appeared clearly to be the preservation of a neutralist stance and the limitation of foreign influences. Multilateral programs under the auspices of the United Nations were continued; the World Health Organization, United Nations Children's Fund and International Labor Organization were particularly active in the country. The Burma Red Cross Society, with some 200 local branches, is affiliated with the International Red Cross Society in Geneva.

One of the government's main instruments for public welfare during the mid-1960's was the social security system initiated in 1955 and administered by the Social Security Board, a dependency of the Ministry of Labor. It is applicable to employees of establishments in industry and commerce having 10 or more workers. The number of persons covered, of which from one-fourth to one-third are women, increased from about 300,000 in 1961-62 to 470,000 in 1966-67. In 1966 the Board maintained offices in Rangoon, Mandalay, Moulmein and four other cities and operated its own clinics and hospitals, the largest of which was the 200-bed Workers' Hospital in Rangoon.

Benefits cover sickness, maternity cases and work injuries. Workers are required to pay 1 percent of their earnings for sickness and maternity benefits, but work injuries are taken care of without charge. The benefits for work injuries include treatment of injury, permanent and temporary disability payments and widows' and orphans' pensions. Funeral grants are furnished under sickness insurance. There are no unemployment benefits, and old-age pensions are available under a separate system for government employees only.

A public housing program was the responsibility of the National Town and Country Housing and Development Board in the mid-1960's. The program was concerned mainly with residential construction on the outskirts of Rangoon and other cities. The housing was to replace squatters' shacks built since World War II by those

whose homes were destroyed during the war and by surrendered insurgents and refugees from insurgent areas. The government provides minimum public utilities and services. Most of the actual construction was done by the relocated persons themselves, with materials made available at nominal prices by the government. Sanitation in the new residential areas and the quality of the dwellings are more satisfactory than those in the districts they replaced.

Country dwellers were receiving welfare assistance in the form of more and better public health facilities and schools, an inexpensive government tractor rental service and help in roadbuilding, irrigation ditch digging and cleaning, and drilling of village wells. Much of the work was based on self-help in which government officials demonstrated proper practices to villagers. The whole rural welfare program at the township and village level was under the direction of social welfare officers responsible to the Department of Social Welfare.

FOOD, CLOTHING AND HOUSING

In most of the country the basic diet consists of boiled rice and a bland curry sauce with various condiments. The curry sauce differs in composition in accordance with locality and economic circumstances. Among the country people of average means vegetables stewed with spices are the usual base of the sauce, but garlic, onions, peppers and leaves of the tamarind and mango trees are also commonly used. Depending on their availability and the economic condition of the consumer, seafood or meat curry is also enjoyed. Almost as essential to the meal as rice and curry is *ngapi*, a salted paste of fish or shrimp, which is used as a curry condiment or as a seasoning with other foods. *Ngapi* derives its importance, not only from the frequency with which it appears on the table, but also because it is the cherished national dish.

An average hearty meal generally also includes a clear soup and a green salad or a cooked vegetable dish. There are some variations in this standard menu. In some of the hilly frontier areas corn takes the place of rice as a staple. In times of extreme want the country people occasionally subsist almost entirely on boiled rice and salt, the latter being regarded as the one indispensable seasoning. Usually, however, there is not much difference between the diet of the rich and that of the poor. When served other than as an ingredient of the curry sauce, fish or meat usually appears as a garnish rather than as a main dish. Beef and mutton are generally disliked, and on the few occasions when meat is eaten as a main dish it is usually pork. Freshwater fish is consumed more frequently than fish from the sea.

The low protein content of the diet is at least in part caused by the Buddhist aversion to the taking of life. This is reflected in the dislike for beef and mutton and in the custom of Chin tribesmen, not themselves Buddhists, of euphemistically referring to pork as "fowl flesh." Seafood is an essential *ngapi* ingredient, but professional fishermen are usually non-Buddhists and looked down upon because they take life.

Beverages are seldom taken at mealtimes, but tea is frequently drunk between meals. Coffee is fairly popular but expensive, and villagers often look on it as a Western affectation. Milk, even as pasteurized in Rangoon, is of doubtful purity and is generally disliked in its fresh form. Condensed cow's milk, most of it imported, is popular for use in tea and coffee and, particularly in urban areas, for the feeding of babies.

The customary practice is to have two meals a day; one taken in midmorning and the other in the late afternoon. The meals are usually much the same. Sometimes a light breakfast is added as a third meal. The regular meals are supplemented by between-meal snacks. All sweets and fruits, except when fruits are cooked with the curry sauce, are eaten as snacks. The people like sweets; perhaps the most favored is the whirlwind cake, a pancake made of sweetened rice flour.

The Burmese Buddhist faith regards drunkenness as a violation of right conduct, but in villages there is occasional excessive drinking. Among the poor peasants, palm toddy or rice liquor is not uncommon. In the cities, among financially prosperous people, imported liquors are consumed. Laborers and other people of lesser means may use locally distilled liquors of very inferior quality. In early 1966 the government announced plans to open state-operated liquor shops.

Tobacco is used extensively by both sexes. The cheroot, a barrel-shaped type of cigar, is the favored tobacco form, but the Shans and some other frontier peoples prefer to smoke their tobacco in pipes. Cigarettes are manufactured, but are not in great demand. Opium is grown legally in some portions of Shan State, but there is little addiction to it, and in 1966 the government began a cutback in legalized poppy growing. As in other parts of Southeast Asia the betel nut is commonly enjoyed.

There is evidence of widespread nutritional defects among the people, but they stem from dietary practices rather than from any shortage of food. The highly polished rice that is preferred and is a mainstay of the daily fare has lost most of its vitamin and mineral content in the milling process, and there is a marked deficiency in the protein intake. Although most curries contain some meat, fish or eggs, the individual portion does not supply an adequate

amount of protein. Fresh fruits and vegetables are an important part of most meals, but they cannot make up for other deficiencies. Analytical studies of the diet are few and incomplete, but estimates indicate that a large proportion of the population is undernourished.

The traditional and still most popular clothing worn by the Burmese consists of a *longyi* (wraparound skirt) and an *eingyi* (long-sleeved jacket). These are worn by both sexes and differ only in that the man's *longyi* is knotted in front, and the woman's is secured at the side; the woman also wears under her *eingyi* a white bodice that is often fastened with colorful, decorative buttons. Men wear headcloths of vivid colors; women may wear silk or muslin scarves. In addition, women often carry parasols. Flat sandals are the common form of footwear for all. Most women have at least a few pieces of jewelry for social occasions, and there is a tendency to put any surplus cash into jewelry, which gives status value and serves as a store of wealth. The basic style of dress is common to all classes, the clothing of the rich differing from that of the poor only in quantity and quality of the wardrobe.

Western-style clothing has grown in popularity. In particular, the use of simple Western garments by children in both town and country was becoming common during the mid-1960's. Even in Rangoon, however, the colorful national costume is worn extensively. Men appear in Western clothing more often than women, but sometimes they have been criticized for doing so on the ground that they are abandoning their national identity. The traditional costumes of most of the minority ethnic groups of the frontier regions are versions of the *longyi* and *eingyi*. There is a great diversity, however, in colors and styles, kinds of headgear and types of jewelry, belts and other adornments. One writer has commented that a complete description of the ceremonial costumes of all of the Shan tribes alone would fill several volumes.

A typical dwelling in the village has walls of woven bamboo strips, wooden flooring and a thatched roof. Usually a veranda extends along the front; there are several rooms for sleeping; and a space for cooking is situated at one side or in the rear. Sanitation facilities are either separate or nonexistent. Windows have hinged shutters of plaited bamboo, which may be closed during times of heavy wind or rain. Most dwellings in rural areas have only one story but are raised above ground level on wooden posts. Because of the customary thatched roofs and generally inflammable building material, houses are very vulnerable to fire.

Some of the tribesmen in the hill areas of the frontier live in clusters of bamboo longhouses in which a number of families occupy separate quarters opening onto a central corridor. Where

sawed boards, usually teak, are readily available, wooden houses are often built. In Shan State some houses have thatched or corrugated iron roofs and walls of overlapping teak slats, the slats so arranged that they can be opened or closed like venetian blinds. In the northern part of Chin Special Division many of the houses are made of teak, so constructed that they can be dismantled, old planks replaced and the whole building reconstructed in a new location. In towns and cities of Burma proper many homes of the well-to-do and official buildings are constructed along Western lines.

Furnishings tend to be simple. Thin mats woven from grass, called *thinbyus*, are used for sleeping. Meals are served on low tables, and the diners sit on the floor. Chairs are not customarily used, and rugs and pictures are rare. For the storage of clothing, there is a wooden box or occasionally a wooden chest of drawers. Kitchens are equipped with china dishes and teapots, a large water storage jar and metal cooking pots of various sizes. Serving spoons are used, but the traditional way to eat is with the fingers.

In the cities the household furnishings of prosperous families tend to be more abundant and varied. Many urban people own radios, and an occasional family may have a kerosene stove, although cooking is customarily done over charcoal. Only a few of the more wealthy and Westernized people have refrigerators, air conditioners and other electrical appliances, and their use is severely limited by the absence of electric power in many areas.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AND LEISURE

With the possible exception of feasting, which normally accompanies the celebration of a holiday, going to a *pwe* is everybody's favorite way of spending leisure time. There are several kinds of *pwe*, but essentially they are kaleidoscopic theatrical performances beginning early in the evening and often lasting all night. The content varies from a slapstick comedy, including offcolor jokes, to religious drama. Monsters and spirits are represented along with human beings in the plays. *Pwes* normally include dancing by girl entertainers who are accompanied by traditional music. Clowns, jugglers and magicians often take part (see ch. 10, Artistic and Intellectual Expression).

There are *pwes* for every occasion. They are usually given free of charge by a family or group. People attend from miles around, carrying a thin grass mat and a soft quilt to sleep on between turns or during an uninteresting portion of the performance. Motion pictures are enjoyed and are fairly well attended, but there are few movie theaters in the hinterland. Serious films are not popular,

and few people understand the kind of humor expressed in Western-style comedies.

Games of all kinds are also popular ways of passing leisure time. Horseracing and cockfights, once very popular, have been prohibited, and the Ne Win government has attempted to restrict gambling of all kinds. Nevertheless, gambling is popular, and women and children vie with men in their enjoyment of games of chance. Card playing, dominoes and mah-jongg are popular, and wagers are customary concerning the exact date on which the monsoon rains will begin to fall.

Sports are also very popular, and the country boasts two games of local origin. One game is *chinlon*, a contest in which teams stand in a circle and kick, butt or otherwise bat a light wicker ball back and forth in an effort to keep it in the air without touching it with hands or arms. The other sport, restricted to Lake Inle in Shan State, consists of boat races in which the paddlers row with their legs. Rowers stand perilously on one leg on platforms set on bow and stern of shallow dugout canoes and, holding the handle of the oar in one hand, wrap the other leg around its shaft and propel the craft by sculling with a leg movement. Crews are dressed in bright costumes; betting on races is traditionally heavy; and the contests attract large crowds.

More conventional sports are also popular, and participation is encouraged by the Union of Burma Sports and Physical Education Committee, a government organization. Track and field competition is lively, and soccer, volleyball, tennis, boxing, judo and karate are popular diversions. United States instructors conducted a tennis clinic in Rangoon in 1966, and Burma has several times been coholder of the Asian Youth Soccer Challenge Gold Cup.

CHAPTER 9

EDUCATION

Since the early 1950's the educational system has experienced considerable growth and change. With independence the country inherited an educational establishment which was too small to accommodate the school-age population and which was ill-suited to the needs of the developing society. Since then the government has assumed increasing control and direction of the educational system and has made considerable progress in raising the general level of educational opportunity and achievement. Concurrently, it has from time to time introduced innovations aimed at adapting the system to modern Burma and making it capable of serving the interests of Burmese socialism.

Among the declarations of policy made by the Ne Win government after it assumed power in 1962 was a statement that the existing educational system was not fitted to existing needs, and that it would have to be transformed into one based on socialist values, giving precedence to preparing all young people for the task of earning a living and emphasizing the study of science. Developments since 1962 have generally conformed to these objectives. Adaptation of the system to the specific situation in the country, already in process at the time, has been accelerated, and political indoctrination has become an officially acknowledged and fundamental part of the educational process.

One of the most significant recent steps taken to transform the educational pattern was the elimination during 1965 and 1966 of all private schools. Before that time the private institutions, particularly important at the high school level, had served a substantial percentage of the student population and provided some of its best education. In decreeing their closure, the government was aware that, at least temporarily, the quality of education in the country would suffer, but it apparently believed that the diversity of education which the private system offered, usually in a foreign language, was not in the best interests of the country. Unity, rather than diversity, was to be stressed in the future.

A companion measure to closing the private schools, most of which were foreign-operated, was establishing Burmese as the only authorized language of instruction. Under British rule almost all schooling above the primary level had been in English, and it

was not until 1967 that it was ruled that examinations for university entrance must be taken in Burmese rather than in English. English is still extensively taught as a second language and is part of the regular public school curriculum. Other foreign languages are taught to a few students in a special school for that purpose.

Adoption of Burmese as the sole language of instruction resulted in a temporary lowering of educational standards. The foreign teachers were lost, and the enrollment of Burmese nationals in teacher-training schools increased at a rate far below that of the total school enrollment. The use of Burmese for instruction requires a full range of textbooks in that language, but the number of such books was still limited in 1967 and teachers had to conduct classes with books which were inadequate in number as well as in variety.

EDUCATION TRADITION

Monastic Schools

The monastery school (*pongyikyaung*) is an ancient Burmese institution which is still operating throughout much of Burma (see ch. 11, Religion). These schools traditionally have been open to all Buddhist boys; normally a boy was sent to one of these schools for at least 1 or 2 years. Since the end of the nineteenth century the monastery schools have been under a gradual process of absorption by the state school system, but the authoritarian teacher-pupil relationship that characterized these schools has greatly influenced present-day attitudes toward the teacher, a condition common in most nations in Southeast Asia.

Since nearly every village is located near a monastery, monastic schooling is still generally available. No tuition fee or other payment is required. All that the pupil must have is a slate and pencil.

In the monastic schools there is little formal standardization of curricula or procedures. Rather, the similarity among schools is the outcome of custom. Everywhere, the central core of the curriculum is ethical conduct as conceived by the Buddhist faith. The teacher recites tales of the lives of the Buddha, illustrating Buddhist precepts; the pupils are required to recite these aloud in unison. Geography, largely cosmological rather than scientific, is taught. History is traditional and somewhat folkloristic, emphasizing dynasties and important individuals. Arithmetic is rudimentary, with a practical emphasis on measurement of land and grain and counting money. The pupils learn to do simple reading in Burmese, starting with the sounds of the alphabet and gradually progressing to simple texts. There may be some rudimentary in-

struction in personal hygiene and health, involving supernaturalistic methods as well as scientifically based practices for warding off disease.

The pupils assemble in one room, seated on the floor in orderly rows, with the monk-teacher at the head of the room, usually seated on a chair or bench. As a man of religion and as an elder, he is entitled to and insists upon the utmost respect. This includes the scrupulous avoidance by pupils of raising their heads higher than his. While one group in the class is reciting, others are silently studying.

The traditional Buddhist education is religious and ethical, and discipline in the monastic schools is strict. Monks may use corporal punishment; more common is the assignment of extra work, such as sweeping the yard near the monastery. The lowliest duty that may be given in punishment for an infraction of discipline is to clean the latrine, a degrading type of work in Burmese eyes. Pupils are required to pay the utmost attention to the teacher at all times and to join in the mass recitations with enthusiasm. Failure in these respects calls down the wrath of the monk and the meting out of punishment. Academic progress is much less emphasized than discipline.

These monastic schools are in a state of transition. Since the 1930's there have been governmental efforts to bring the monastic schools more into alignment with the developing system of public education. In 1967 most of the fundamental educational system was operated by the state, but monks were still permitted to teach children through the fourth grade.

Colonial Education

The policy of the British colonial government was to encourage privately operated schools under government supervision. The three systems of schools developed were the vernacular, Anglo-vernacular and English. After 1922 the vernacular schools were established and maintained by local authorities. Instruction was carried on in one of the recognized vernacular languages, usually Burmese. Graduates of such schools were not eligible for admission to college, and, consequently, the schools were not held in high regard.

In the Anglo-vernacular schools, classes were conducted in both English and Burmese and, occasionally, other vernacular languages. In the English schools and the Catholic and Protestant mission schools, English was the language of instruction. These schools charged fees, although they had some government aid. The graduates of such schools who wished to go on to college or the

university had to take the annually held government-prescribed examinations. Only a handful of graduates were able to pass these examinations. The university curriculum was formally academic, with emphasis on British history and literature.

As a result of the rising sentiment of independence which followed World War I, exponents of Burmese nationalism established a system of national schools as a protest against the predominantly British emphasis of the schools operated under the aegis of the colonial government. The curriculum of these institutions was primarily devoted to Burmese history and culture. The quality of instruction was not high because the schools were not able to secure adequately trained staffs.

Higher education in Burma developed slowly. Eventually three types of schools were set up; liberal arts colleges, teacher-training institutions and technical schools. Instruction in the first two was formally academic, with a completely British orientation. Training was directed principally toward the exhaustive annual examinations. Such preindependent technical schools as the Artisan Training Center in Rangoon, the Government Technical Institute at Insein and the Agricultural College at Mandalay offered more practical instruction but were inadequate to make more than a token contribution toward the provision of technically trained manpower.

THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

In 1967 the entire educational system was centrally administered by the Ministry of Education through the Department of Education. Education was free for elementary and vocational schools, but a small fee was charged for high school and postsecondary academic training. Before 1965 attendance was voluntary, but in the middle of that year the government announced its intention of making it compulsory for elementary students before the year's end. To what extent this intention has been carried out is not known, but school facilities were not sufficient in 1967 to make compulsory attendance effective. A 1965 United Nations estimate saw the country able to reach the goal of 7 years of universal elementary education by 1980.

The school year runs from June to March. Before 1964, 5 to 5½ hours of instruction were offered for 185 days per year. Beginning with the 1964-65 school year, the number of schooldays was increased to 210, with a minimum of 5 hours of instruction offered per day. Curricula are established in detail by the Department of Education, which also prescribes the uniforms to be worn by teachers and students.

Public Primary and Secondary Schools

During the school year 1965–66 public kindergartens enrolled several thousand pupils, but completion of this preschool year was not a prerequisite for entrance into the regular primary school cycle which consists of Standard (grade) I through Standard IV. Students enrolled in 14,000 primary schools in 1965–66 numbered about 1.9 million, and there were approximately 37,000 teachers. Compulsory primary courses included Burmese, arithmetic, geography, history and general science. In some schools courses were offered also in religion, domestic science for girls, school gardening, drawing and physical training. Children normally commence the primary cycle at the age of 6.

The middle school cycle includes Standards V through VII, and students who have passed primary school final examinations are eligible for entry in it. In the 1965–66 year some 370,000 students were enrolled in about 850 middle schools, with nearly 9,000 teachers. The curriculum covers the same general subjects as in primary school except that some schools have vocational courses, and, in all, English is introduced as a compulsory foreign language in Standard V. No other foreign languages are taught at this or any higher level in the regular state system.

Examinations are conducted internally on completion of the middle school, and certificates are issued by the Department of Education to those who are successful in the examinations. These certificates qualify students for entry into ordinary state high schools, into an agricultural or technical high school or into teacher-training classes.

Standards VIII and IX represent the regular course of study in the high schools. Some of them also offer middle school courses, and in a very few cases, such as that of Rangoon Central Model State School, a curriculum covering primary, middle and high school levels is offered. Beginning in 1962 a Standard X, or matriculation year, was added in some high schools. Available statistical data concerning high school enrollment and teaching staff are conflicting, but during the 1962–63 school year there were nearly 300 high schools with an enrollment of about 75,000 students, including 8,000 in the matriculation grade.

On completion of the 2-year high school course, students take the High School Final (HSF) examination, consisting of compulsory examinations in English, Burmese and mathematics, and three optional examinations chosen from a list of a dozen other subjects. In 1962 about half of the 43,000 candidates taking this examination were successful. A passing grade in this examination plus completion of Standard X in high school make a student

eligible to take the matriculation or entrance examination for the universities.

Beginning in 1967 students passing the university entrance examination were required to enroll promptly and were not authorized to defer entrance until a subsequent year. This rule was adopted in order to reduce pressure on the limited higher education facilities.

In April 1966 the reorganization of all primary and secondary state schools was prescribed by promulgation of a Fundamental Education Act. This legislation, to become effective on a date to be declared by the Revolutionary Council, announced the aim of implementing the Burmese Way to Socialism by making adequate fundamental education available to all. Under this act, kindergarten is to become the regular beginning year of primary school, thus lengthening the primary cycle to 5 years. Middle school is to be extended to include Standard VIII.

High school, which is to begin with Standard IX, will include the number of grades declared by the government to mark the end of the fundamental stage of education. Later, the government announced that the new program was to be placed in effect for the school year of 1967-68. Initially, however, the change is to be organizational only. Standard VIII is to be detached from high school and made the terminal grade of the middle cycle. High school will continue as the already-established Standards IX and X, but the intent to extend this cycle to 12 or more grades, as facilities permit, seems evident.

Under the new system, completion of middle school marks the decisive fork in the educational road. At this point, those best qualified are to be prepared for academic higher education in a general high school, and others will be offered vocational training as facilities permit. The revised fundamental system is to be administered by a Fundamental Education Supervisory Council under chairmanship of the minister of education.

Vocational and Technical Schools

Public vocational and technical secondary education is furnished by specialized institutions, of which the largest is the Technical High School in Rangoon. It prepares students for industrial apprenticeship or, occasionally, for further study at a higher technical level. Students usually are required to take courses in Burmese, English, mathematics, physics, chemistry and technical drafting. Specialization is offered in radio or automobile mechanics, electricity, machine shop practices and the building and metal trades.

Two years of vocational training are offered by two trade schools, formerly called artisan training centers, to middle school certificate holders. Courses generally correspond to those at the Technical High School in Rangoon. A 2-year course in vocational agriculture is offered at two agricultural high schools, and there are two schools which teach agriculture and animal husbandry in addition to ordinary school subjects at the middle school level. Also, there are a few farm schools which offer a 1-year course of study to adults who have completed primary school.

Vocational courses in regular schools at the primary level include school gardening and arts and crafts. In middle schools carpentry and technological and commercial subjects are taught in some urban centers; agricultural and animal husbandry subjects are offered in certain rural areas. Because of the shortage of qualified teachers and funds, however, only a few schools can offer these courses, which are taken in addition to the regular curriculum.

Other Public Schools and Training

The government conducts a large and increasing number of additional school and training programs. By mid-1966 about 100,000 workers had taken courses in unspecified fields of production, and a Central School of Political Science had been established in Mingaladon where it was expected to train some 4,000 party cadres a year. Apparently connected with this program was a series of ideological training courses for armed forces personnel. About 21,000 students were reported enrolled in 27 evening classes conducted by 1,400 volunteer teachers. Training courses had been established for both men and women in sports, in labor affairs and in improving the efficiency of clerical workers. A government experimental station included a school of horticulture in which students from five of the country's ethnic minority groups were included, and international YWCA training centers offered a variety of courses in vocational and adult education.

Private Schools

By the end of 1966 private education had become virtually a thing of the past, although the Buddhist monastery schools continued to operate. Before 1963 private schools that met certain standards were given government recognition and were registered in accordance with the Private Schools Act of 1951.

In 1963 a new Private Schools Act gave the government wide powers over private schools, including delegation of authority to the minister of education to close any or all of the private establishments. During 1963 and 1964 an increasing number of restric-

tions were imposed on the operations of private schools, and the end of this kind of education began in 1965 when 129 of the country's more than 800 private schools were taken over by the state. Most continued in operation as public schools, but their names were changed to numbers, as in the public system, in order to avoid the implication of class distinction.

By the end of 1966 almost all the remaining private schools were taken over, but two English-language schools remained in operation in Rangoon for the children of diplomats and other foreigners. Most of the private teachers left the country, and the nationalized units quickly lost their identity in the anonymity of the public system.

Of the initial 129 schools taken over in 1965, 45 were in Rangoon, and over half of these were missionary institutions. Most of these used English as the language of instruction, and all were high or junior high schools. Among other private schools involved in the initial action were six Chinese- and five Indian-language schools. Their students were later reported as leaving the country because of the language barrier to further education.

Postsecondary and Higher Education

Rangoon College, the original element in what was to become the Rangoon Arts and Science University, was opened in 1885. In 1885, Baptist College was founded in Rangoon and recognized by Calcutta University as an intermediary college. In 1918, Baptist College was renamed Judson College and in 1920 merged with Rangoon College to become Rangoon University. By 1963 the University included, in addition to the central establishment and its schools in the capital city, constituent colleges in Bassein and Moulmein. Rangoon University had faculties in arts, science, social sciences, agriculture, medicine, forestry, law and education and was regarded as one of the better institutions of its kind in South-east Asia.

The country's other university, the University of Mandalay, had its own constituent intermediate colleges at Taunggyi, Myitkyina and Magwe and offered degrees in arts, sciences, agriculture and medicine. Before attaining university status in 1958, the University of Mandalay was a constituent agricultural college of Rangoon University.

The general pattern of higher education is for the first 2 university years to be devoted to basic studies, including both the student's major field and general education. At the end of this period it is necessary to pass an intermediate examination which represents 12 years of schooling and carries with it eligibility for another 2 years of university study, leading to a bachelor's degree

in the schools of arts and science. The bachelor of medicine and surgery degree customarily represents a 7-year program of pre-medical and medical study beyond the intermediate level. In engineering the bachelor of science degree calls for 6 years of post-matriculation study. Forestry requires 5 years.

Rangoon University grew in enrollment from fewer than 2,000 students before World War II to over 10,000 by 1960, while the University of Mandalay grew from about 150 in its opening year of 1945 to over 2,500 in 1960. Overall enrollment in universities, colleges and higher academic institutes rose from about 18,000 in 1961-62 to some 24,500 in 1965-66. During this time the total teaching staff grew from 1,000 to 2,800.

Most of the European staff and faculty of the University of Rangoon left the country with the outbreak of World War II; many did not return, and the changes made in the educational system during the 1960's caused further attrition. As a consequence, it has been necessary to enlarge classes substantially and to increase on a relative basis the numbers of assistant lecturers and tutors.

Postsecondary students have frequently involved themselves in political activities, sometimes with great violence (see ch. 14, Political Dynamics). As the result of a series of disorders that started at Rangoon University in 1962, the government promulgated the University Education Law of 1964 which ended the considerable autonomy previously enjoyed by the universities and reorganized the university system. The professional faculties of both the Rangoon and Mandalay establishments were separated from the central institutions, and the two universities were renamed the Rangoon Arts and Science University and the Mandalay Arts and Science University. The detached faculties became independent institutes, and the colleges ceased to be constituents of the universities.

The new legislation provides also for direct government control of higher education through a director of universities administration, requires screening of students and faculty to weed out non-conformists and stipulates that priority be given to teaching of science, technology and what is described as socialist construction. Students apply for admission to a central University Administrative Body rather than to the individual institutions. First through third preferences in institutions to be attended must be specified, and admission is based on grades made on the entrance examination. Each school is assigned a quota of new entrants. The law lengthened the academic year from 6½ to 8 months and appears to have altered somewhat the content of degree programs and the requirements for certificate and degree progression.

Postsecondary adult education with degree-granting status is furnished by the Workers' College in Rangoon. This school, formerly the independent University of Adult Education, received its new name and authority to award degrees pursuant to the 1964 legislation. There are technical institutes at Insein and Mandalay with postsecondary level programs. They offer 3-year courses in building construction; highway, railway and municipal technology; machine tool and design technology; diesel power and heavy equipment; electric power and electronics; and mining.

An agricultural institute at Pyinmana furnishes postsecondary education for agricultural extension workers and for teachers of vocational agriculture in the high schools. Applicants for admission must be junior assistant teachers selected by the Department of Education or be holders of High School Final certificates. The 2-year study program leading to the diploma in agriculture offers courses in agricultural economics, agronomy, horticulture, plant protection, extension methods, animal husbandry, agricultural education, chemistry, farm mechanics, botany and physical education. In addition, a recently established institute at Insein furnishes training for veterinarians.

In the 1954-55 academic year about 380 individuals went abroad on state scholarships for postsecondary and graduate studies. The next year some 230 state scholars were studying in the United States, and a few fellowships had been made available under a Ford Foundation program. In 1966 the government acknowledged that it was still necessary to send students to other countries for graduate work in arts and sciences, but the flow of scholarship students abroad had greatly diminished. In 1965-66 there were reported to be 83 students abroad on state scholarships and 7 on scholarships granted by France and Japan.

INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF AND METHODS

A 1962 survey of pupil-teacher ratios in countries of East Asia found the ratio in Burma's public school system to be 42 to 1 at the primary and secondary level and 29 to 1 at the high school level. These ratios were slightly below the East Asian average. The same survey concluded that some 40 percent of the teachers were less than fully qualified at the primary and secondary levels and 14 percent at the high school level. Criteria were not specified for these percentages, which were about average for the East Asian countries examined.

At least until recently, many more men than women have been engaged in the teaching profession. In 1961 about three-fourths of the teachers in the public schools through Standard VII were men. At the same time, however, women constituted a majority of the students in the teacher-training schools.

In almost all state school categories, student enrollments have increased more rapidly than the number of teachers available, and the need for more instructors has taken precedence over improvement in teacher-instruction processes. The teaching career does not appear to offer great inducements; primary schools are very crowded, many are located in remote areas and the primary school teacher's pay is low. Recruitment of teachers to meet the increasing needs of the rapidly growing schools presents a serious problem for government authorities.

Regular state teacher education below the postsecondary level is conducted on three levels. High school teachers are trained in the Rangoon Institute of Education, which was formerly the Faculty of Education at Rangoon University. It offered several degree programs requiring 2 to 4 years of study. Middle school teachers are offered training at teacher colleges at Rangoon and Mandalay. Candidates must have passed the High School Final examination and completed a 2-year course. Primary school teachers receive their instruction in one of the two teacher colleges or at one of four other institutes for teacher training. A Middle School Certificate is a prerequisite, and the course takes 1 year. Some technical and vocational secondary schools offer teacher training in their own specialized fields. It is not clear, however, from what source the country is to draw its faculties for professional graduate schools, universities and specialized technical schools at the postsecondary level unless it is from the graduates of these schools themselves.

Methods of instruction have been slow to change, and progressive ideas have not been easy to incorporate into the formal pattern of teaching. In primary schools, memorization and unison recitation tend to persist. Formal study recitation methods have characterized the middle schools, and at the university level, lecturing at dictation speed with the students taking verbatim notes remains common procedure. This is due in part to tradition, in part to a shortage of books and in part to an increasingly critical shortage of teachers.

The result at all levels has been heavy emphasis on memorization of facts and recall of these facts upon demand, in writing or orally. In the monastery schools group recitation was the custom. Since independence public education at higher levels has been didactic in content. Lectures are earnestly reviewed immediately before the examination, with awareness on the part of the student that passing will consist largely of possessing a good memory. The country's postsecondary teachers have defended this teaching method, arguing that it emphasizes essay rather than objective type questions in examinations. The usual essay question, however, demands factual recall in essay form rather than creative reason-

ing. Teaching methods have been under review, but the continuing shortage of trained teachers in relation to the growing size of the overall student body will make the introduction of new and improved techniques difficult. More progress in this direction has been made in urban centers than in the villages, where tradition and superstition are strong, and where there is some opposition to change.

There was a considerable shortage of instructional materials, particularly of textbooks, during the mid-1960's, partially because of the requirement that Burmese be the sole language of instruction. So few texts in the language were available that in the mid-1960's instructors sometimes found it necessary to teach in Burmese from an English-language text, a practice conducive to perpetuating the practice of rote learning and taking of excessive verbatim lecture notes.

EDUCATION IN THE SOCIETY

The Burmese word *kyaung* means both school and monastery, indicating the close traditional relationship between education and religion. The Buddhist monastic schools placed their teaching emphasis on how to live, not on how to make a living. Their role has been to teach discipline, morality and respect for elders as significant aspects in the Buddhist way of life. Education in this sense has been a positive value in the culture, and the person lacking education has been regarded not only as ignorant but also as irreverent. To this extent, education has been a traditional criterion of social prestige.

With the relative decline of monastic education, religious instruction has been included progressively in the public schools, but the parents are not always convinced of the efficacy of a public education which goes far beyond that taught in the traditional monastery institution. Once a child has learned the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic, there is a tendency to remove him from school and put him to work in the rice paddies. As a consequence, the dropout rate during the early years of public primary schooling has been very high. In addition, there is a tendency for students through secondary school to be considerably older than the norm for the age in grade of students throughout Southeast Asia, a circumstance which probably results from crowding in schools and the practice of interrupting education for a year or more in order that the young may help on the farm. At the post-secondary level academic education is much desired, and the dropout rate falls substantially.

Before independence was achieved there was a prevailing view that the educated person should not perform manual labor of any

sort. Education was associated with work in an office, an attitude probably conditioned because the most sought after positions were the civil service assignments available to the educated under the British colonial administration. The job-getting value of an education has a much greater emphasis than in earlier times, but arts majors continue to outnumber science majors at the universities and the feeling has not been eradicated that it is undignified to work out of doors as an engineer, agronomist or other professional whose occupation might call for such activity.

The years since independence and, particularly, those since the Ne Win government came to power have seen a profound change in the role which education plays in the society. During the colonial period, going to school meant either gaining a limited literacy in the monastery schools or obtaining a British-type education which, even for women, sometimes included higher education in Europe. The usual goal was a civil service appointment conferring status. During that period there was an insurmountable gap between the traditional learning in the pagoda and the sophisticated education required for the colonial civil service. There was little industry, intermediate business jobs were filled largely by Indians and Chinese, and most managerial and professional positions were occupied by the British. By the 1960's, however, most of the foreigners had left the country, and the educational system faced the heavy task of providing the education necessary to enable Burmese to fill the gap in practical skills created by the departure of the aliens (see ch. 4, Population and Labor Force).

A great many of the younger people want to learn engineering, mechanical, electrical or construction skills. In many cases, however, they are unable or unwilling to obtain sufficient preliminary education to qualify them for further training in these specialties, or, if educationally qualified, crowded conditions in the industrial schools or their remoteness from one prevent their entry. In addition, the demand for skilled industrial workers is still so limited that successful completion of training is by no means a guarantee of employment. A study conducted in the early 1960's revealed that in the villages of Upper Burma there were virtually no establishments using mechanical equipment which could not be operated by one or two people (see ch. 4, Population and Labor Force).

Regardless of the present limited availability of industrial employment, there is no question about the value which both the people and their government attach to industrial training. A university degree and a profession or a desk job with the government remain the ideal goals of most bright and ambitious young people, but vocational training followed by a good job in industry comes next. There is so little interest in or knowledge of trade that re-

cently the government was reported as trying to recruit bazaar tradesmen to work in the government-controlled retail stores because of the lack of success with young school-trained personnel.

LITERACY AND LANGUAGE

In 1965 it was estimated that the country's literacy rate was 58 percent for all persons over 15 years of age and that it ranked sixth among 17 East Asian countries for which estimates were made. At about the same time another source estimated that urban literacy was about one-third higher than rural. The rate for ethnic minority groups is not known but is presumably lower than that of ethnic Burmans. Minority languages are used as languages of instruction only in a few schools and, in these, only in the first grade. The formerly extensive Indian and Chinese colonies operated their own schools and were highly literate in their own languages, and were frequently literate in Burmese and English as well. Their schools have been closed, however, and many of these people have left the country (see ch. 4, Population and Labor Force).

Literacy among women is lower than among men. No specific estimate is available, but a 1965 survey placed female literacy in the 30- to 50-percent bracket, together with such countries as Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. It is probably rising more rapidly than that of men. In the years before independence most literacy was acquired in monastic schools, which were open only to boys. More recent years have seen extensive development of the public school system, and during the early 1960's about 40 percent of the public school student body enrolled in the first seven grades consisted of girls.

In 1966 the government opened a campaign to eradicate illiteracy by about 1975. Beginning in April 1966, 15,000 to 20,000 students, teachers, workers and monks were reported volunteering to devote a month to teaching, reading and writing to adults in areas where regular adult education was not available. The volunteers were to operate out of designated population centers in areas assigned to them by the government.

By 1966, Burmese was, for all practical purposes, the only language of instruction in the country's school system, and English was taught as a second language. An Institute of Foreign Languages in Rangoon, however, was devoted to the teaching of French, German, Russian, Japanese and Chinese to about 450 students. English, the only language of higher instruction under British colonial rule, is still a required subject in the regular school system, beginning with the fifth grade, although progressively less emphasis has been placed on it.

CHAPTER 10

ARTISTIC AND INTELLECTUAL EXPRESSION

Most of the country's writers on cultural subjects assert that British conquest and colonial rule destroyed the vitality of Burma's traditional art forms and brought nothing of real value to replace them. At the middle of the nineteenth century, the court at Mandalay was the cultural center of Burma, supporting the best of the dancers, musicians, wood carvers and silverworkers. The British annexation ended this patronage and also introduced a new set of artistic and intellectual values. Neither the colonial government nor the new Burmese elite produced by Western education and colonialism gave traditional values much support, and these values remained largely dormant until after independence.

Western influences led to the adoption of new forms and the modification of traditional ones in the theater and, to a lesser extent, in music. Exclusively Western models were frequently followed in literature and painting. After independence the government began a systematic cultural revival to help develop nationalist group identification in terms of older Burmese cultural symbols.

Burmese intellectual life was affected by the Western impact in much the same way as the artistic life. Some forms were adopted outright; others modified Burmese concepts. A Western educational system was introduced, but little of the intellectual attitudes basic to the model in the West were assimilated. Western education helped toward social advancement in the new society. It was the key to employment with the government and a symbol of identification with the ruling elite. But the new educational system required little change in underlying cultural attitudes; the form was acquired but not the content.

Western intellectualism's ideal has never been approached, nor has an intelligentsia in the Western sense emerged. Even those individuals whose social status depends to some extent on Western education, such as university faculty members or government officials, do not feel themselves members of a distinct intellectual group.

CULTURAL REVIVALISM

Upon achieving independence in 1948 the government embarked on a campaign of cultural revival. The social disintegration in-

cident to World War II and subsequent civil strife were most unfavorable for renaissance, but by the end of the 1950's the government's programs, including the sponsorship of schools and activities dealing with cultural subjects, were bringing to the Burmese scene more intellectual and artistic activity than had been witnessed at any time since the beginning of the colonial era. The government viewed a revival of traditional Burmese culture as an important part of the process of national integration. To promote the program, the government established a Ministry of Union Culture a few years after independence.

Projects under the program have included aid to higher education (see ch. 9, Education). All the universities are channels of intellectual expression in contemporary Burma. The government also has sponsored a state museum, state schools for music, drama and art, annual cultural exhibitions and schools for the study of Buddhism.

The Burma Translation Society was established by the government in 1947 as a semiautonomous body, and its mission was to make available translations of Western writings and to foster the growth of Burmese literature and culture. The society has published several hundred books on agriculture, industry and other subjects related to national development and mass education. It encountered considerable difficulty in adopting Burmese to the needs of technical and special vocabularies, and a committee was appointed to develop a new standard terminology for the language. One of the society's more important projects has been to prepare an *Encyclopedia Birmanica*, the first volume of which was published in 1955.

A National Museum was established in 1952 in Rangoon's Jubilee Hall. Jubilee Hall had not been used since Aung San lay there in state for several months following his assassination in 1947 (see ch. 2, Historical Setting). A state school for music and art was opened on the same premises as the museum. Under its first director, U Khin Maung, a Paris-trained artist, it began to teach drawing, painting and music. The school was later divided into separate schools of music, drama and fine arts; in 1955 a new state school of music and the dramatic and fine arts was opened in Mandalay. Here, art training is limited to instruction in western techniques. Musical instruction is given in both traditional Burmese and certain Western instruments, and transcriptions of Burmese music into Western musical notation are being made. Only fragmentary work had been done previously in this field.

Annual Union cultural exhibitions were begun in 1953. Held near the western entrance of the Shwedagon pagoda, these exhibitions have featured displays of Burmese antiquities, handi-

crafts of various ethnic groups within the Union and contemporary art (mostly painting). In opening the 1955 exhibition, the Minister of Union Culture declared that one of its purposes was to display old Burmese art and cultural objects in order to preserve indigenous traditions, to promote their development and to make them known to other nations.

ARCHITECTURE

Religious architecture and its associated arts—sculpture, in particular—are the most important forms of artistic expression in Burma. The ubiquitous pagodas, whitewashed and occasionally covered with gilt, are evidence of the religious focus of the society.

The Pagan period of the ninth to the thirteenth centuries saw the synthesis of various foreign architectural elements, especially north Indian themes, into a characteristically Burmese style. The best known of the Pagan temples, the Ananda pagoda, was constructed, according to tradition, by Buddhist monks from India. This pagoda and other structures similar to it were quite possibly inspired by the great Brahmanical temple at Paharpur in Bengal. Though its form is Indian the ornate exterior decoration is typically Burmese.

With the exception of exuberant decoration, the most distinctive element of Burmese architecture of this classic period is the emphasis on verticality. In the Pagan pagodas the vertical is stressed by terraced recessions which culminate in the superstructure of the stupa which tapers to a point. This emphasis on vertical lines came to characterize all Burmese pagoda construction. The typical pagoda is a structure of solid masonry, shaped roughly like an elongated bell, rising to a point topped by the Burmese umbrella, the *hti*.

The Shwedagon pagoda in Rangoon, built to entomb eight hairs of the Buddha, epitomizes this tradition and is the most famous Burmese shrine. It has served as the model for many pagodas throughout the country. Begun much earlier, the Shwedagon was completed during the fifteenth century and has been continually added to since. The pagoda is set on a low hill surrounded by delta flatlands. Covered with gold leaf, it rises some 326 feet above its platform, magnificent against its background of green tropical foliage.

Like architecture, Burmese sculpture also originally was based on Indian models and then evolved its own styles. The most representative sculptures of the classic period are numerous reliefs found in the Ananda pagoda illustrating the life of Buddha and the Jataka stories. These reliefs show distinctive qualities of ani-

mation and grace plus the characteristic Burmese liking for ornate decoration.

The classic period in Burmese architecture ended with the Mongol invasion and the Thai migrations (see ch. 2, Historical Setting). From the thirteenth century until British occupation in the nineteenth century, Burmese architectural development was cut off from the foreign influences that had contributed to the original synthesis. What emerged was a sophisticated folk art which elaborated on classic forms in a typically Burmese flamboyant style. The wooden palaces and gilt pagodas of Mandalay show this development at its peak. The complex architecture of the Mandalay palace has been aptly described as "something out of a fairyland of architectural fancy." It was into this tradition that Western forms were introduced by the British. Just as in other spheres of art, the result was that in part these forms were adopted outright and in part they were synthesized with the native Burmese tradition.

The British erected buildings throughout Burma, but their main efforts were concentrated at the capital, Rangoon. Though a small town had existed for centuries on the same site, the capital was entirely planned and executed by the British. Most of the main buildings were constructed either for government or for Western business firms. The city that emerged was Western in style, oriented toward the port, with broad tree-lined avenues. Solid masonry predominated, and city regulations prohibited the erection of any other type of structure within the city proper.

It was only in the twentieth century that an architecture evolved which combined basic Western forms and construction methods with traditional Burmese styles. A British-trained Burmese architect, U Tin, was largely responsible for this development. His work is best exemplified in the city hall of Rangoon, known as the Rangoon Corporation building, and in the Myoma High School in Rangoon. In the Corporation building U Tin added nineteenth-century Burmese forms and decorative motifs to a basically European building. The principal Burmese additions were plaster decorations imitating the carved woodwork of the nineteenth century and towers with multiple overlapping roofs like those of the Mandalay palace and the structures associated with pagoda entrances and shrines.

The nationalist outlook of the government after independence, coupled with the extensive building program, gave impetus to the attempt to evolve a truly Burmese architecture, one which would express the new state. Of the structures erected since independence, perhaps the best example of the style evolved by U Tin is the railroad depot in Rangoon, completed in 1954. Much of future

Burmese architecture, however, will be influenced by Burmese now studying abroad, particularly in the United States.

MUSIC, DANCE, DRAMA AND FILMS

A varied heritage of song, dance and drama, sometimes inseparable one from the other, has persisted from precolonial times in Burma. But Western influences, both during and since British rule, have affected this heritage. Since the late nineteenth century Burmese music has been strongly subject to Western influence. Certain Western instruments, such as the violin and guitar, have become popular; both are sometimes used to accompany traditional airs.

The earliest Burmese musical instruments are said to date from the time of King Alaungsithu and include a drum with a cowhide head, a kind of high-pitched clarinet, a flute and a small harp. The present composition of the Burmese musical troupe is traced back to the conquest of Thailand, about 1763, by the son of King Alaungpaya. Many Thai artists, including dancers, composers, musicians, wood carvers and metalworkers, were brought to Burma. As a result, certain Thai airs and songs were adopted.

Earlier Burmese forms of songs, music and dancing in existence before contact with the Thai are *sidaw*, *dobat* and *bonshe*, all named for the associated type of drum. *Sidaw* music, song and dance were intimately connected with the court and played by courtiers on special occasions. *Bonshe*, largely a folk dance music, was performed at plowing and harvesting times. *Dobat* and *ozi* are ordinarily used by villagers for all sorts of occasions except funerals. *Ozi* music is one of the most commonly encountered forms of Burmese music, for it accompanies the *shinbyu* ceremony for novitiates in the monastic order. *Dobat* often accompanies the chanting of the *thangyat*, a kind of poem, frequently satirical, recited in chorus alternately by two groups. *Thangyats* are most commonly heard from the parading floats at Burmese New Year (Thingyan) celebrations (see ch. 11, Religion).

In addition to the foregoing types of music, there is also an orchestra, now most commonly heard as an adjunct to dramatic performances. As well as various drums and wind instruments, the orchestra ordinarily includes a "gong-circle" which consists of a circular low wooden frame within which the performer sits and on which are strung a number of gongs arranged in a scale; a "drum-circle," similarly constructed and played; and a bamboo clapper, a large section of split bamboo the sides of which are struck together to provide additional rhythmic accompaniment.

Burmese drama is intimately connected with music and dancing. The most common form of the drama in Rangoon is the *anyaint*

pwe, a form of burlesque, which consists of an orchestra whose leader is often the organizer of the dramatic group—two male actors and one or more female dancers. The play is a series of alternating episodes. First, there is an interchange between the two actors or clowns, toward the end of which one of the dancers enters and takes part. After some chaffing and joking the clowns yield the stage to the dancer, who sings and dances for a brief interval. The clowns then reappear, and after another bantering scene among the three of them, the dancer goes off the stage to change her costume or to be replaced by another dancer. This may go on for many hours. Most of the dialogue seems to be extemporaneous.

The *anyeint pwe* is extremely popular, perhaps the most widespread of all forms of dramatic art in Burma. It is heard fairly frequently on the radio and is produced throughout the year except during the rainy summer months. A simple stage with a minimum of stage property is all that is needed. This form of entertainment was brought to a high point of technical perfection during the first half of the twentieth century by the master Po Sein.

The *zatpwe*, or Jataka show, is seen less often than the *anyeint pwe*. This play takes its name from the Jataka stories of Buddhism. The Jatakas are accounts of his previous lives, told by the Buddha to his disciples to answer questions raised by them. There are traditionally 550 of them, of which the 10 longest ones are called the Ten Great Jatakas. The Jatakas provide incidents which find artistic reworking in Burmese prose, poetry, sculpture, painting and drama. Like the *anyeint pwe*, the *zatpwe* is presented outdoors on a very simple stage and is usually free to the audience. It too is accompanied by an orchestra and may last many hours.

Other forms of drama, seldom seen nowadays, are the puppet show and the *yamazat*. The former is an intimate union of play and music, similar to the *zatpwe*, now seen only in abbreviated form. The *yamazat* is based upon the famous Indian epic poem, the Ramayana, and is about the trials and wanderings of Prince Rama, his wife and followers.

Since World War II another type of dramatic presentation has flourished on a limited scale in Rangoon. The war created shortages of film and led to unemployment among movie actors. As a result there developed a type of play resembling American musical comedy, the *pyazat*, which is given in movie theaters at fixed prices. Almost all the actors are also movie actors who work in the studios in the morning.

The *pyazat* theater is a repertory theater. Each show is presented afternoons and evenings for 2 weeks and then is replaced by a new one. The plays vary little. The main plot concerns a boy

and girl who come together in the face of the disapproval of their elders. Several other couples are also involved. The main action is developed in scenes; alternating with the scenes are interludes during which comedians in front of the curtain banter in the fashion of the *anyeint pwe*. Usually some singing by the principals and other actors is involved. In the denouement all the couples whose love has hitherto been frustrated are united and live happily ever after. The orchestra uses Western instruments, and its musical selections alternate between wholly Western tunes and Westernized Burmese airs. Texts of the *pyazat* exist only in manuscript, so far as can be learned.

Although relatively few motion pictures were being produced in Burma during the early 1960's, the popularity of this medium and the truly indigenous flavor of the productions made the cinema a vital expression of popular tastes. Most films can be grouped on the basis of their themes in the categories of action, *nats* (spirits) or history.

The action films are reminiscent of some early American epics, such as the "Perils of Pauline." The story line at best provides only a loose framework for scenes of fisticuffs, shooting, frantic auto chases and occasional romantic interludes. The *nat* films deal with the supernatural and testify to the importance of *nat*-worship and the supernatural in contemporary Burmese life. Most often these films deal either with *nats* or with *leikpyas* (the "butterflies" or souls of individuals). The historical films deal, often in rather fanciful form, with themes from Burmese monarchic history. They resemble in many ways similar products of Indian studios and possibly are inspired by them.

HANDICRAFTS

Before the introduction of factory-made fabrics from abroad it was customary for every household to have its own hand loom, usually operated by the girls of the household. The products of these looms were for domestic consumption rather than for sale. The cloth was coarse but durable and was woven either from silk or from cotton.

In addition to these domestic products, there were certain centers of weaving whose textiles were especially esteemed. Near Henzada there flourished a center for the manufacture of heavy silks resembling brocades. Of the truly native silk industry, that centered on Amarapura was the best known. Characteristic of the Amarapura products were shot silks in pieces 8 yards by two-thirds of a yard, in reds, greens and yellows, the woof colors generally being in lighter shades than the warp. Certain color combinations, such as at least two shades of green, were avoided as being

unlucky, while rose-pink was especially esteemed. Local taste seems originally to have preferred relatively bright colors and gay patterns using a number of shuttles. All these pieces were produced on elementary frame looms and were quite expensive.

Modern weaving centers exist at Prome, Tavoy, Shwedaung, Mandalay and Kindat. Cotton blankets in red, yellow and black stripes are made in the Chin Hills, while thicker blankets, white with red stripe patterns and fringed ends, are a specialty of Pakokku. The so-called Shan bags, in a wide variety of patterns and colors, are the products of most of the hill peoples, the style and ornamentation varying from tribe to tribe. Related to these woven goods are the sleeping and sitting mats which form an essential part of the furniture of every house. Of these the coarser types are woven from the fibers of the pandanus palm or even from thin strips of bamboo. The finest quality mats, notably those from Danugyu, are manufactured from a species of reed and are almost unbelievably smooth and flexible—an ideal bedding for a hot and humid climate.

The present distribution of lacquer ware, from Japan to Burma, supports the view that the probable center of origin was China. The fact that the industry flourishes about Kengtung in the Shan State suggests that lacquer reached Burma from China through that region. The center of modern manufacture is Nyaungu, near Pagan.

The basis of lacquer (in Burmese, *yun*) is a grayish, gummy liquid obtained from trees by tapping. This liquid hardens in moist air to a jet black solid. In making lacquer ware a mixture of this liquid, together with clay or ash, is applied to a framework of split bamboo or, in the case of the finest work, of bamboo and hair. Each coat is allowed to dry hard and is smoothed before the application of the next. The object is turned on a primitive lathe for polishing. Despite the dark color of the original lacquer, it may be colored by the addition of various dyestuffs, so that shades of red, orange, green and yellow are found, as well as those derived from mixtures of these colors. Gold leaf also may be used for decoration of the lacquer. A really first-class object may take as long as 6 months from start to finish. The whole tends to darken with age, and older specimens take on a rich mellow tone.

Objects made from lacquer are diverse in shape and purpose. They include begging bowls for monks, food carriers with matching plates and cups, drinking beakers, betel boxes, containers for toilet articles, combs and other items of dress. Modern tastes have added items, such as table mats, cigar boxes and finger bowls, most designed for sale to foreigners.

Lacquer is put to a variety of uses by Burmese craftsmen. It is used in the waterproofing of umbrellas and as the usual fixative for gold leaf and for glass mosaics. It is employed in the making of book covers and of specially ornate religious texts written in black on a red and gold ground. It is used most for the decoration of the wooden pillars in palaces and monasteries to whose beauty it has added immeasurably, the colors blending admirably with the rich tones of Burmese timbers.

Burma is rich in timber suited to many uses. From these varied woods Burmese craftsmen have demonstrated what may well be their greatest skill. Palaces, monasteries, houses, boats, carts and domestic utensils, all demonstrate the truth of the observation that wood seems part of the fabric of the Burmese craftsman's being. Using but a limited range of tools, Burmese craftsmen have achieved work of great distinction. Though so much of their work has been lost, enough remains or is available in photographic records to assess their overall attainment. Their larger works are their best, for the preferred woods are coarse grained and not well suited to small objects.

In early times it is probable that sumptuary laws confined ornamentation to palaces and monasteries, where all the available space is covered with figures of spirits, birds and animals in wonderful settings of foliage, flowers and ornamental scrollwork. Though the carving, if inspected closely, often seems crude the overall effect, with its added glories of lacquer and gilt embellished with mosaic in glass, is very pleasing. Although the most extensive work was thus restricted, all wooden objects provided scope for the carver: the richly worked bulkheads of the rivercraft, the panels of carts, stands and shelves for the home, all exhibit this love of carving. To the major achievements must be added the host of smaller items which form part of every household and the miracles of ingenuity in bamboo and rattan in the use of which the Burmese are singularly skillful: cooking utensils, combs toned a rich brown in Sesamum oil, umbrella frames, boxes made of cane or of toddy-palm leaves and furniture. With a limited range of tools the Burmese have produced and decorated most charmingly an astonishing variety of objects.

The basic processes of the potter do not vary greatly from region to region within the country. The clays available are varied, but they are generally iron loaded and yellowish in color, turning orange and red on firing. White clay also occurs which is suitable for the production of true chinawares. Much of the pottery in common use is manufactured without the aid of a wheel. Firing takes place in holes in the ground or in regularly constructed kilns.

Glazed wares, some of which achieved international fame as "Martabans," were manufactured by the dressing of the unfired wares with lead slag or galena, byproducts of the silver mining and extraction in Shan State. It seems likely that glazing was learned from China, possibly through the Shan State. In fact, it is possible that the Shans were responsible for the introduction of most, if not all, pottery techniques into Burma.

As with most Burmese hand products, the ceramics of different regions of the country are esteemed for special purposes: the black pottery of Tavoy for water containers, self-cooling by evaporation; the salt-glazed jars of Upper Burma for bathrooms; the wares of Papun for their high quality (though their ornamentation may not appeal to Western taste); smaller vessels from Upper Burma for the storage of pickles; others for cooking food containing tamarind, which cannot be cooked in aluminum ware.

The most characteristic employment of glass mosaic is in the decoration of wooden buildings and on pagodas, images and containers for religious use. A famous example of its use in buildings was the Hmannandaw, the Crystal Room, of the Mandalay royal palace, while notable examples of its religious application are to be seen on the Shwedagon pagoda. The technique is not Burmese in origin, but it found a ready acceptance in that country where a love of jewelry is widespread. It seems to have been borrowed from Thailand in the eighteenth century, and it is said that its best practitioners today are Shans.

For centuries Burmese craftsmen have worked in gold and silver as well as in various alloys of copper. In the use of these they have attained a high degree of skill, although the work, like that of the wood carvers, is more distinguished by boldness and freedom than by meticulous finish. The techniques of manufacture do not differ materially from those used in other areas of Southeast Asia, nor do the products, except perhaps the temple bells, which seem to be a national specialty. Nevertheless, Burmese silverware is of deservedly high repute, though much of the modern work is but an imitation of traditional wares. Jewelry is another art in which much admirable work has been achieved. Burma is rich in jewels, and jewels set in gold are an essential part of every Burmese woman's wardrobe, as well as the usual form of family investment.

The production of jewelry and the setting of jewels is still a major occupation in Burma. Rubies, spinels, sapphires, emeralds and diamonds are all richly and handsomely set. The last two stones are not found in Burma, but diamonds especially are most eagerly sought after by wealthy Burmese women whose ambition it is to possess a full set of diamond jewelry. Although jade of the

very highest quality is found in Burma, it is not used there as a precious stone. The main demand for Burmese jade is in China.

In bronze and brass the achievement of the Burmese foundry workers is considerable, most of it dedicated to religious ends. Of particular note is the bell casting, the greatest achievement being the great Mingun bell, some 12 feet high and 10 feet in outside diameter, weighing about 80 tons. Other great bells exist, although no others of such great size. Strictly, these should not be called bells but gongs, since they have no clapper but are struck. It seems likely that they are of Chinese inspiration. Small gongs and cymbals form a large part of the typical Burmese orchestra, and these too are often of good craftsmanship.

LITERATURE

Traditional Burmese literature ended with the monarchy in 1885. This literature, some 700 years old, had been written in the form of manuscript books, for the most part in Buddhist monasteries or in the courts of kings and princes. Religion and the deeds of royalty were the sources of inspiration. Most of these works deal either with court life in Burma or with themes from Indian literature. The treatment tends to rely upon the supernatural, the imaginative and the miraculous.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century writers came under European influence, through English channels. Printing became a factor in publishing, and the court, a source of both themes and patronage, disappeared.

The twentieth century ushered in a new type of prose literature. Modern novels began to appear, soon followed by novelettes. The dominant stream in Burmese literature for the next few decades, however, continued to be religious writing. The leading figure in this period was a monk, Ledi Sayadaw ("revered teacher" of Ledi in Upper Burma). During his long life he wrote over 50 works—primarily religious treatises. His eminence lay not only in these but also in his almost evangelical travels over Burma. His style of writing, like that of all his contemporaries, was similar to the style current under the last dynasty of the monarchy.

The founding of the University of Rangoon in 1920 gave an impetus to Burmese literature. Dramas were translated, original work was encouraged and rhymed poetry in short forms thrived. A department of Burmese was created at the University, and there was a gradual increase in the requirements of Burmese in the curricula of the schools and of the University. One of the difficulties encountered was the fact that English was the language used in government. A sign that this obstacle was being overcome was the admission of U Sein Tin, who had graduated with honors in Bur-

mese, into the Indian Civil Service. U Sein Tin became prominent as a writer of fiction and essays, distinguished by their realistic presentation and simple style.

The Archaeological Survey of the government and the Burma Research Society were concerned for the preservation and publication of inscriptions and of the Burmese classics. This led to a revival of interest in earlier Burmese literature and to the use of the older and simpler, but classic style in contemporary writing. The most prominent figure of the beginning of this reformation was U Pe Maung Tin, professor of Burmese and later head of the University of Rangoon.

Contemporary with U Sein Tin were U Wun and U Thein Han, both of whom were educated in part in England. They initiated a style which reduced florid ornamental usages and eliminated involved subordinate sentences, contrasting markedly with the writing style of the immediately preceding years. The publication in the early 1930's of collections of stories and poems by writers connected with the University brought the new style to public attention. The period of reformation in Burmese style was one of increasing translation and adaptation of English folk tales, fiction and history. It seems likely that this absorption of Western material was facilitated by the simplification of writing style mentioned above.

In the early 1930's a group of writers emerged, largely composed of Rangoon University students, intent not only upon using a modern style but also upon introducing contemporary ideas from the West. This group was associated with the political activity of the 1930's and was interested both in British socialism and Soviet communism. Prominent in the group were Thakin Nu (now U Nu) and Thakin Thein Pe (now called Thein Pe Myint). About 1937 this group of students organized the Nagani (Red Dragon) Book Club, modeled on Victor Gollancz's "Left Book Club" in England. During the 4 years of its existence it issued a number of translations and original productions, mostly dealing with revolutionary and leftist topics.

The members of this group directed their criticism at almost every institution and a well-known example of this activity was *Tet Pongyi*, (The Progressive Monk) by Thakin Thein Pe, published in 1935. The book is an attack on modern monks who relax their traditional discipline and was an attempt to reform the monastic order (see ch. 11, Religion). From about the beginning of World War II until 1950, Thein Pe Myint was active in politics. Since then he has been publishing lengthy accounts of the earlier years of this political activity. These are among the few records of

recent Burmese history. As a writer and thinker, he is highly respected for his clear, forceful style and rich sense of humor.

The period after 1920 was one of expanding interest in fiction. A number of new magazines offered a means for authors to reach the public. The leading magazine of the earlier period was the monthly *Dagon*, which contained a few short articles of popular interest together with ghost stories, adventure stories and detective stories. The bulk of writing shortly before World War II was light fiction, but there was a fair contribution of serious writing by political or purely literary authors.

World War II and the Japanese occupation checked the growth of literary activity until 1946. Soon after 1946, despite internal strife, a flood of cheap booklets and pamphlets was issued, chiefly stories of love and adventure and some wartime narratives, most of them reflecting the recent experiences of the Burmese people and introducing many new words and phrases along with foreign ideas. There was also a flood of leftist political literature. Among the more purely literary and serious writers of recent times are the historian U Yaw, Shawe U-daung, author of the *Golden Peacock*, U Aye Maung, professor of Burmese at the University of Rangoon, and Maung Htin Aung, who has specialized in folklore.

Several extreme left-wing writers are still active. Their writings are distinguished by strong language and Communist overtones. Three good novels, *Mo Auk Myebin* (The Earth Under the Sky) by Min Aung (1948), *Min Hmudan* (The Civil Servant) by Tet To (1950) and *Tathtega Myat Ko Ko* (The Noble Brother from the Army) by Thadu (1952), have been awarded prizes by the Burma Translation Society for their literary merit. It is doubtful that the writer himself enjoys much prestige in Burma. The most respected authors are those who already occupy stations of prestige in the society as teachers or government officials; most of the outstanding writers are therefore men.

CHAPTER 11

RELIGION

Theravada Buddhism, one of the two major forms of Buddhism, is practiced by nearly 85 percent of the Burmese population. Minority religious groups of significance include Moslems, Hindus, Christians and the indigenous ethnic peoples with their animist religions. None of these minority religious groups accounts for more than a very small percentage of the total population.

The predominance of the Buddhist religion is indicated by the fact that almost every village supports at least one *kyaung* (monastery). Buddhist pagodas dot the landscape in both Upper and Lower Burma, and yellow-robed *pongyis* (Buddhist monks) are characteristic figures of daily life. Over 99 percent of the ethnic Burmans are Buddhist, as are an equal percentage of the Shan, Mon, Palaung and Pa-o Karen ethnic groups. All of the other indigenous ethnic groups have some Buddhist adherents as well.

The Moslem and Hindu religions are restricted almost entirely to the Chinese, Pakistani and Indian minorities, who live primarily in the urban areas of Lower Burma (see ch. 5, Ethnic Groups and Languages).

Christian missionaries have long been active, primarily in the Delta and in the Frontier areas. In 1960 nearly 3 percent of the population were Christian, the majority belonging to the Karen ethnic group. Accurate information on the division of Christians according to denomination in 1967 was not available. The Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Seventh Day Adventist and American Baptist Churches predominated in the initial missionary effort. Activities of the missionaries were centered mainly on education, medical care and social welfare.

The great majority of the Burmese are formally committed to Buddhism as the established religion and identify themselves as Buddhists. Actual religious behavior, however, consists of much more than purely Buddhist beliefs and practices. Before the introduction of Buddhism from India, the Burmese had indigenous beliefs centered on the propitiation of spirits known as *nats*. This older religious complex persists as the dominant belief system among many of the remote hill tribes.

Among the Burmans, the Shans, the Karens and some other groups Buddhism was adopted in addition to the existing religious

beliefs, but it did not wholly displace them. In some sophisticated urban circles the more formal Buddhist doctrine has supplanted *nat* worship and other folk practices. In the rural areas, however, elements of Buddhism and spirit worship have combined to form an integrated religious system that is peculiarly Burmese.

Theravada Buddhism

Like the other great world religions Buddhism was altered in form and content as it was transmitted from one country to another. The spread of Buddhism began soon after the death of Gautama Buddha, who lived in the sixth century B.C. in the northern Indian state of Maghada. The faith which he inspired first spread throughout India and Ceylon and later was carried by monastic missionaries to the countries of Southeast and Central Asia, as well as to China, Korea and Japan. During the early centuries of Buddhism's growth a religious movement, a major schism, arose among the Indian Buddhists concerning the philosophical and spiritual teachings of the Buddha. As a result of the schism, Buddhism has been divided for over 2,000 years into two major schools—the Mahayana, or Greater Vehicle, and the Hinayana, or Lesser Vehicle.

The form of Buddhism which was firmly established in Burma by the eleventh century was that of the Hinayana school. Among its followers the preferred term for their religion is Theravada—the Way of the Elders. This is the system of beliefs recorded in the ancient Pali dialect, which is felt by its adherents, as well as by many scholars of Buddhism, to represent most faithfully the original ideas and intent of its founder. The Theravada School is the principal formal religion of Ceylon, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, as well as that of Burma.

The second half of Buddhism is represented by the Mahayana or Greater Vehicle School. The beliefs and practices of this school are based on scriptures which were originally recorded in Sanskrit. Though it is no longer widely practiced in India, Mahayana Buddhism is the popular religion of Tibet, Nepal, Mongolia, China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam.

As an outgrowth of the Indian philosophies which preceded it, Buddhism uses ancient Hindu-Indian concepts as basic philosophical assumptions. Even though Buddhism represents a departure from the older doctrines, these primary assumptions are vital to the mechanics of Buddhist theory.

Initially, the Buddhist as well as the Hindu sees the universe and all forms of life as parts of a process of eternal flux. The character of this flow is cyclical and recurrent. For the individual this means that the present life is merely a phase in an endless progression of

events, a progression which neither ceases with death nor continues indefinitely in some heavenly afterlife. Life and death are merely alternate aspects of individual existence, marked by the transition points of birth and deanimation. The individual who follows this course is essentially a role player who is continually reborn in new guises, and not all of them are necessarily human. It is possible that his next existence will be that of a god or a non-human animal. This endless circle of rebirth in which all creatures are involved is known as *samsara*, the wheel of rebirth, or "perpetual wandering."

As *samsaric* existence proceeds, what the individual becomes is not determined by a creator god nor by a purely capricious fate. One's future life is directly dependent upon one's own conduct in this and previous lives through the workings of an impersonal law of causation, karma (in Pali texts, *kamma*). The daily acts of the individual have inevitable consequences in an improved or impaired karma which will determine the character of his future existence. Karma ensures, with careful precision, that as one sows, so shall one reap. Each act, mental or physical, tends to produce its like for the actor and affects the role he will play in his next life.

Theoretically, through moral behavior and good deeds, a sincere Buddhist can anticipate a constantly improving status, in social and material terms, as well as spiritual rewards. These are not the ultimate objectives of Buddhism, however, because the individual remains tied to the wheel of karma in an endless round of existences. It is the complete escape from the tyranny of rebirth which is the essence of the Buddha's message. Self-emancipation in nirvana (in Pali, *nibbana*), the state of enlightenment and true wisdom, is the ultimate goal of conscientious Buddhists. It is the negation of all that the individual experiences during the cycle of rebirth and is described by Buddhists as the extinction of greed, the extinction of delusion and the extinction of hate. The Buddhist continually strives to perfect himself through the many stages of his existence, conquering his worldly desires through concentration and meditation, in the effort to attain nirvana.

THE ROLE OF BUDDHISM IN BURMESE LIFE

Educated Burmese often maintain that Buddhism is not a religion but a way of life. In attempting to dissociate Buddhism from supernaturalism, they illustrate the fact that Buddhism is a pervasive element in Burmese culture, influencing every aspect of social and individual life. Buddhism provides a moral code and serves as a framework against which a great deal of Burmese behavior may be measured and interpreted. There is no clear line

between the secular and the religious considerations of daily life. Buddhism gives meaning and significance to activities that are only slightly related to religion. It influences the reactions to any given situation and becomes a point of reference for the typical Burmese interpretation of events.

The high status value attached to being a good Buddhist encourages general conformity to Buddhist behavior norms. Moral and upright behavior implies acting in accordance with the injunctions of the Buddhist precepts. The average person tries to observe the five basic precepts which enjoin Buddhist morality. These are to abstain from taking life, from stealing, from committing adultery, from telling a lie and from partaking of intoxicants. These and numerous other precepts are socially valued because they permit the Buddhist who observes them to acquire merit or *kutho*, which will ensure an improved future existence.

In reality, all of these rules, even the most basic, are commonly interpreted in terms of a given situation. No one will pretend that these ideals of conduct are rigidly observed by all individuals. In defining social relationships and social situations, however, the Burmese do pay deference to these injunctions. For example, the fisherman is often stigmatized and relegated to a low social status because his occupation violates the first precept against the taking of life. Even though he may not actually kill the fish, only remove them to dry land where they die naturally, he is aware of violating a fundamental Buddhist principle. His intention is the determining factor in this situation.

Strict Buddhists will have no part of any occupation which is indirectly or directly involved in the taking of life. Others may rationalize their vocation in a number of ways or attempt to compensate for their bad karma by the performance of meritorious deeds. Even those who are outwardly substantial citizens, worthy of respect and deference, will be held in low esteem if they have intentionally and repeatedly violated the precepts.

BUDDHIST CEREMONY AND RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM

Theravada Buddhism, as practiced in the country, contains relatively little religious symbolism, and has no churches in the Western sense or formal religious services. However, the most important religious symbols of the Burmese are associated with their Buddhist beliefs. These primary religious symbols are obvious and omnipresent. The thousands of pagodas, raising their gilded spires, express dramatically the position of the formal religion. The number and size of these pagodas are among the most striking features of the culture, as are the yellow-robed monks. Images and paintings of the Buddha appear everywhere, on pagoda platforms and

monasteries, homes and classrooms, as well as upon bus entrances and wall calendars.

There are many kinds of pagodas, but a basic practical function, as distinguished from the symbolic function, is that of a reliquary. The most important pagodas are shrines containing sacred relics, either remains and images of the Buddha or of his noteworthy followers. Many pagodas are said to contain a hair of the Buddha. One in particular, the Botataung pagoda in Rangoon, was destroyed during World War II. In the postwar reconstruction of the building the fabled hair and other relics were actually found in an elaborate container which had been enclosed in the base of the old shrine.

The donation of food to the Buddhist monks is a daily event in the life of the average Burmese Buddhist. It is the householder's best opportunity to improve his karma regularly through performing a good deed. The monk is bestowing a favor through his visit to a home, because it gives the householder the chance to earn merit. The daily ritual represents a reciprocal responsibility for both the donor and the recipient. At least one monk or a novice visits each house in the village or town, receiving contributions of rice or a few vegetables in their alms bowl. There is no acknowledgment on the part of the monk nor any suggestion of a favor being granted because of the ritual nature of the event. Monks are occasionally given breakfast at the donor's home in elaboration of this ritual. This earns even greater merit for the donor.

Most houses have some kind of Buddhist shrine, either a small image or picture of the Buddha. There are, however, no prescribed rituals which are observed in connection with it. Some families place daily offerings of fresh water, food and flowers before the shrine. Family members may perform genuflections before it while Buddhist scriptures are recited. In theory, devotional prayer has no place in Buddhism, because Buddha is not a high deity to whom one can appeal. The Buddhist has no cause to pray at such a shrine, in his own home or in the pagoda, but only pays homage to the Buddha. In some villages and in many urban areas small groups have been formed which meet in the evening to meditate and receive instruction in Buddhist doctrine and philosophy.

The Burmese are primarily an agricultural people and are keenly aware of the changing seasons. All of Burma's religious holidays are calendrical events, indicating the importance of these seasonal changes. Burma's most important holiday is Thingyan, the Water Festival. It occurs in April, but is not precisely dateable because the Burmese lunar calendar varies in its yearly cycle (see ch. 12, Social Values). Thingyan has no basis in the Buddhist scriptures. Its original significance was probably that of an agri-

cultural ritual, though it has acquired Buddhist meaning and symbolism. The ceremonial exchanges of water which mark the holiday are part of a tradition borrowed from India. The Water Festival is believed to signal the descent of Thagya Min, king of the *nat* spirits, from his mountain home. For traditional Burmese it marks the coming of the New Year and anticipates the end of the hot season and the coming of the monsoon rains. Water symbolizes purity and generally represents a gift which brings good results. During Thingyan, ceremonial gifts of water are made to the monasteries and to the elders. There are formal exchanges of water and a ritual washing of sacred objects such as images of Buddha and pagodas.

In the villages Thingyan is the only holiday observed by everyone. All work comes to a halt for about 3 days, and classes are dismissed from school. As the holiday wears on, the air of solemnity and restraint declines, especially in urban centers, and the water exchanges become jovial mutual dousings by peer groups and individuals. In the rural areas such riotous behavior is restricted mostly to the youngsters.

Buddha Day occurs in mid-May and commemorates the birth, death and enlightenment of the Buddha. It is marked on the lunar calendar by the full moon of Kason, and is ritually celebrated by sprinkling the roots of the sacred Bo trees, under which Buddha achieved enlightenment.

Dhammasetkya, an important Buddhist holiday, occurs at the full moon of Waso in mid-July. It not only marks the official beginning of the Buddhist Lenten period, but also commemorates the Buddha's first sermon and his renunciation of worldly life for that of a mendicant ascetic. It initiates a period of restricted social activity when neither marriages and other personal celebrations nor any public festival may be held. The day itself is the occasion for offerings of flowers at pagodas and sacred places, as well as the donation of robes to the monks and strict observation of the Buddhist precepts.

Second in importance to Thingyan, in the enthusiasm with which it is celebrated, is the mid-October Festival of Lights known as Thadingyut. Its arrival signifies the end of the Lenten period, as well as the end of the rainy season, a time of heavy work in the rice paddies. It is an occasion of great joy for the Burmese, who express their high spirits by lighting thousands of lamps and candles and placing them on trees, houses, monasteries and pagoda platforms. Explanations for the ritual say that it is the anniversary of the descent of the Buddha from the heavens. Gifts are made to the monks, and families take this time to visit pagodas and other holy places.

Tazaungdaing, which follows the Festival of Lights by a lunar month, is more widely celebrated in Lower Burma than in Upper Burma. It is the primary occasion for holding *kahtein* ceremonies, in which the community presents to the monks all of the robes, bowls and other monastic necessities. The traditional custom of holding all-night weaving competitions is a featured part of Tazaungdaing in many communities. Honor is awarded to the unmarried girl who first completes the 5 yards of cloth needed for a monk's robe.

The final calendrical event of national significance is the Harvest Festival, occurring in late February. Like most other holidays, it falls on a Buddhist *ubonei* (duty day) and has assumed Buddhist connotations. However, it is more directly concerned with *nat* propitiation, because the intervention of these powerful spirits is needed for a successful harvest.

In addition to the nationally celebrated holidays, there are many local pagoda festivals which occur annually during the hot season from March through May. These colorful festivals center on the symbolic Buddhist pagodas but have the atmosphere of a carnival or county fair rather than that of a purely religious occasion. Public entertainment, in the form of fireworks, circuses and plays, normally accompanys the celebration.

Another periodically observed religious event is the *ubonei*, the almost weekly Buddhist duty day. These duty days occur at the full and dark moons of each month and the eighth day after each, punctuating secular life in much the same way as the Christian Sabbath. Devout Buddhists refrain from working and visit the monastery on duty day, to hear the scripture recited by a monk. Older people may observe such ascetic disciplines as fasting after midday, a practice normally imposed only upon the monks. There are some indications that only a very small segment of the rural population regularly visits the monastery on duty days. It appears that the merit acquired through attendance is not great enough, especially during the planting and harvest seasons, to make up for the interruption of normal activity.

There are several Buddhist rituals which occur at important points in the life cycle of the individual. The first ceremony takes place when the child is about a week old and consists of a ritual cleaning during which the baby's head is shaved. There is no formal Buddhist ritual attached to the naming of a child, though the occasion may involve elaborate feasting and entertainment. The name is largely determined by reference to astrological interpretations. While Buddhist doctrine acknowledges no relationship with this type of determinism, Buddhist monks are very often the respected interpreters of signs and omens. Technically, such acts

constitute a repudiation of monastic discipline and are more properly the concern of the Brahman priests and the many types of astrologers (*bedin sayas*).

The most important life-cycle ritual is the *shinbyu*, which involves the initiation of every boy as a novice (*koyin*) in the Buddhist monastic order (see ch. 7, Family). The *shinbyu* ceremony contains a large amount of religious symbolism. Although an individual is not eligible to become a *pongyi* before the age of 20, the high cultural value attached to the monastic life imposes this ceremony on adolescent boys. The social necessity of the initiation reinforces the spiritual value of the act and adds to the status of the *shinbyu*.

The *shinbyu* has considerable effect on the social role and behavior of the boy experiencing initiation. When the Burmese youth discards his ceremonial costume and accepts the monk's yellow robes, his life is abruptly transformed from that of a carefree childhood to that of austere monastic discipline. It is a remarkable transition in terms of the behavioral demands played upon the youth and the change in social attitude expressed toward him. This monastic life is usually temporary, and most boys reassume the role of a layman, though they are expected to be more mature and responsible individuals as a result of their monastic experience. Personal choice determines how long the boy stays in the monastery. Few boys persist in the monastic role, though they may return to it in later years.

The *shinbyu*, as well as the *natwin* ceremony for girls, may also be occasions for an almsgiving celebration, in which gifts are presented to the local monastery. The cost of these gifts and of the other festivities sometimes constitute such great expense that the *shinbyu* sponsor's family is forced to sell valued possessions or go into debt. The elaborate and expensive ceremonial which commonly accompanies the *shinbyu* is nowhere called for in Buddhism, and some Buddhist monks have commented with distaste upon these extravagant gestures, which the participants justify in terms of the religious merit acquired by the donor.

Neither a funeral nor the service of a monk is strictly necessary at the burial of the dead. Normally, however, there is a relatively simple funeral service in which the *pongyi* or Buddhist monks play the chief religious role. Unlike some Southeast Asian peoples, such as the Thai, the Burmese usually do not cremate their dead, except in the case of famous monks and some wealthy or especially pious people. The monks lead the funeral procession to the cemetery and recite scriptural passages, which are calculated to remind the mourners that life is only a preparation for death and that death is the chance for a fuller life. This Buddhist interpretation

of life introduces a relational element into an emotionally charged situation. The element of social crisis and uncertainty is reflected in the recognition of supernatural forces unrelated to Buddhist doctrine. A ceremony may be performed to make certain that the soul, believed to be a butterfly, has flown from the body. Money is placed with the deceased, for there is a mythical river which must be crossed between existences and the ferryman must be paid.

THE PONGYI

The *pongyi*, or Buddhist monk, is a living symbol of the Burmese religion. The essence of the monastic life is to make the most of the fortunate incarnation as a human being and thereby hasten progress toward nirvana. Buddhist society is divided into well-defined sacred and secular spheres. Strict adherence to a life of self-denial and meditation requires the monk to divorce himself from secular concerns. His renunciation of the world and his observance of the strict monastic vows are evidence of his greater nearness to the ultimate goal of all sincere Buddhists. It is his status in this regard that entitles him to the respect and support of the layman. The term *pongyi* itself means great glory, indicating the reverence in which the monk is held by those still involved in worldly pursuits. There is also an order of Buddhist nuns, but they are less numerous and are not accorded the honor which the monks receive.

Theravada Buddhism does not acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being, nor is the Buddha a higher power who may be called upon to intervene in human affairs. In this context the *pongyi* is in no sense a religious intermediary but is concerned primarily with his own salvation. According to Theravada doctrine the *pongyi* is not obligated to perform any duties with respect to laymen. In practice, however, most monks expound the scriptures on occasion, give advice on village matters and take part in religious ceremonies when they are requested to do so. Their function as monastery teachers, of great importance in former times, is still carried on in many villages. From a layman's point of view, the functional value of the monks resides in the simple fact of their existence. Through gifts of food and general support to the *pongyi* the layman increases his own merit and furthers his own search for nirvana.

The *pongyi* is subject to a total of 227 rules of conduct, which, among other things, prohibit the taking of food after midday, the use of any personal adornment and the accepting or use of money. Should he violate any of the precepts, particularly those of major importance, such as the vow of chastity, he may be expelled from the monkhood. A *pongyi* is prohibited from owning other than the

few things considered necessary for the monastic life, such as a begging bowl and the yellow robe.

It is impossible to give an exact figure for the number of monks in Burma at any one time because of the relatively easy entry and departure from the monastery. Many individuals enter the monkhood for only a short time and never intend to commit themselves for life. Those who take the monastic vows and make such a commitment are probably in the minority. One estimate, quoted in the Burmese Parliament in 1954, placed the total number of monks at 800,000. This figure apparently referred to all males, including the novices and students, who had spent some time in the monastery. Another report, made in 1953, gave a more probable figure of 100,000 and probably differentiated between the monks and the novices, who may stay in the monastery for only a few days.

The many men who become fully ordained *pongyis* and strictly observe the rules of the monastic order testify to the strong religious feeling which is the basis for much Burmese behavior. Although most are motivated by sincere belief, there are many monks who enter the monastery to escape from some difficulty in the outside world. The gradual decline in monastic discipline was first noticed in the early years of this century and continues to be a problem of great concern to the elder and particularly learned monks (*sayadaws*) and serious Buddhist laymen. The monkhood has been criticized for the ignorance and illiteracy of some of its members, though others are noted scholars who have devoted their lives to the study of the Buddhist scriptures.

A *pongyi kyaung* (monastery) is located outside of most Burmese villages. The wooden living quarters of the monks are usually enclosed within a fenced compound or sacred area. Most monastery compounds contain several of these dwelling houses. Some of the larger monasteries may have, in addition, separate buildings which are used as kitchens, bathhouses, sleeping quarters and libraries. Pagodas normally are not part of a monastery compound.

The daily routine in the monastery is designed to encourage meditation and freedom from the cares of the world. Prescribed duties, other than those concerned with meditation, are few. Monks are expected to participate in the early morning ritual of collecting food from each house in the village, though this duty is usually performed by the younger monks and novices. No food is eaten after the noon meal, and the day is spent primarily in studying the scriptures, in teaching younger monks and novices or in meditation. The education of the village children was a major activity of former times but more recently has become the responsibility of secular schools (see ch. 9, Education). Despite the emphasis on meditation the monastery is not isolated from everyday village life

and, in fact, is the social hub of the village. It is often the center for the spirited and colorful Buddhist village festivals and has been of great importance in the educational and formative influence on the life of the villagers.

The *sangha*, or Buddhist monkhood, is a loosely structured institution. The primary requirements for membership are that one be a male and at least 20 years of age. A monk may leave the *sangha* at any time.

There is little in the way of formal organizational structure within the Burmese *sangha*, though such a structure existed under the Burmese kings. At the top of an administrative hierarchy was the Thathanabaing, a meritorious monk who was appointed by the king to serve as the head ecclesiastical authority. The country was divided into a number of districts, each under the leadership of a senior monk who served mainly as an intermediary between the monasteries and the Thathanabaing. At the bottom of the hierarchy were the monasteries, controlled by a senior monk or abbot.

The monastic hierarchy all but disappeared under the British, who made no new appointments to the Thathanabaing and showed no interest in promoting the *sangha*. As a result, there has been little coordination within the *sangha*, and discipline has become a matter for each monastery to deal with individually. This factor of decreasing central control has been one of the major reasons for what has been considered by the more devout Buddhists to be a decline in morality and discipline within many monasteries.

There are a number of traditional sectarian differences among Burmese Buddhists. Some of these sects are based on differences of opinion as to the prevailing nontheist doctrine of Buddhism, though such differences have always been slight and have not attracted many people. Sectarian differences, based on points of monastic conduct, exist also but are of minor importance, and many laymen are unaware of them. Of far greater importance than these sectarian differences are the developing associations within the *sangha* which cut across all sectarian lines and seek to organize large bodies of monks for action programs.

THE SANGHA AND THE GOVERNMENT

The *sangha* is seen by the Burmese as something detached from the rest of society, though ultimately dependent upon it. The sincere *sangha* member is bound by rules of monastic discipline to avoid secular involvements and devote himself to religion. Yet the great local influence wielded by the monks, partially through their role as educators and as advisers on personal and moral problems, has made them a traditionally powerful agency of social control.

The Burmese monarchies recognized the potential of the *sangha*

and maintained parallel civil and ecclesiastical agencies for the purpose of censoring and disciplining the monkhood. The latent political power inherent in the *sangha's* role became apparent during the latter part of the colonial period when a number of urban monks became actively involved in the nationalist movement (see ch. 14, Political Dynamics). Some of the participants became martyrs to the nationalist cause, though monastic participation in politics generally met with the disapproval of the more devout Buddhists as a departure from the rules of discipline. Despite this disapproval, political activity and demonstrations by members of the *sangha* have occurred from time to time since independence, even though the nationalist cause is no longer at issue.

After gaining independence the Burmese Government was anxious to restore the *sangha* to the position it had occupied during the days of the Burmese kings. Active programs of legislation were initiated, and efforts were made to increase the *sangha's* opportunities and incentives for formal study. These efforts on the part of the government were only one aspect of an officially and popularly supported program to strengthen religious values and behavior. The unity of religion and government was actively promoted by U Nu when he was prime minister, and, as a result, Buddhism was declared the state religion by a 1961 constitutional amendment.

The relationship between the government and the *sangha* changed abruptly after the 1962 coup by General Ne Win. The new chairman of the Revolutionary Council reversed most of the religious legislation of the previous government and adopted a policy which may be called separation of church and state. Because there is disagreement as to where the sacred and secular lines of authority should be drawn, relations between the *sangha* and the government often have become strained since 1962.

BUDDHISM IN INTERGROUP RELATIONS

As the dominant faith of the Burmese, Buddhism enjoys a unique position in the society. The number of Burmese who are professedly non-Buddhist is extremely small, though there are some large ethnic minorities who differ from the national norm.

As an important symbol of the Burmese culture, Buddhism has been transmitted by the Burmese to some of the indigenous minorities of Burma. As part of the assimilation of these groups into the national culture, this process continues. Proselytizing among the non-Buddhist minorities constituted much of the religious revival which began after independence. A school was established at Yegu for the education and training of special missionary monks. Such missionaries carried Buddhism into Chin, Kachin and Kayah hill

areas, where they had been forbidden to propagate their faith before independence.

The significance of this missionary effort is twofold. Primarily, it illustrates the value of Buddhism as an important cultural theme and as a source of pride and self-respect upon which nationalist feelings can be based. The Burmese Buddhist views himself as the agent of civilization, bringing enlightenment and culture to the non-Buddhist minorities. Any feeling of superiority which the Burmese express may well be voiced in terms of the presence or absence of Buddhism among another people (see ch. 12, Social Values).

Buddhist missionary activity also illustrates the nonexclusive character of Burmese Buddhism. Not only are non-Burmese eligible to become Buddhists, but they need not abandon their traditional beliefs and customs to do so. Symbolically, therefore, something is gained—the common bond of religious expression—and little if anything is lost.

The religious affiliations of the foreign minorities have deterred assimilation in some cases, as with the Indians and Pakistanis, though of minimal importance in other cases, as with the Chinese. Buddhism originated in India but died out there long ago as a significant movement. Most Indians and Pakistanis in Burma, therefore, are Hindus or Moslems (see ch. 5, Ethnic Groups and Languages). Religious differences have accentuated the hostile attitudes which the Burmese and the Indian immigrants have felt toward one another. Although Buddhism is tolerant of competing faiths, the individual Burmese is easily aroused by remarks or actions which he feels are insulting to his religion. Many incidents of violence between Buddhists and Moslems have occurred for such reasons.

Except for a small number of Chinese Moslems, the Chinese minority group is of little significance as a deviant religious element. Buddhism is a part of the Chinese religious tradition, though it no longer has maximum influence in that culture. The religious customs of the Chinese in Burma do not usually parallel those of the Burmese, though both are often Buddhist. The Chinese, in fact, may be ignorant of much of the content of Burmese religion. Ascendant Chinese families, however, often adopt Burmese religious forms, particularly if these forms have important prestige value which they find useful. It is not unusual to find prominent Chinese merchants erecting Burmese-style pagodas or sponsoring elaborate *shinbyus* for their sons, especially if their wives are Burmese. The true content of Burmese religion may become more important to second-generation Chinese, who are often the children of intermarriage and may identify with Burmese culture.

Generally, the Chinese community in Burma, as in other such communities throughout Southeast Asia, is not noted for any strong religious orientation.

SPIRIT WORSHIP

A number of indigenous animistic beliefs and practices combine with Buddhism to form a unified system which is the sum of Burmese religious behavior. Buddhist doctrine offers a way to ultimate salvation in the distant future but offers little comfort or aid in the more immediate dangers and emergencies of daily life. In Burma and in the other Buddhist countries of Southeast Asia security in daily affairs is obtained through propitiation of spirits, astrology, fortunetelling, use of charms and amulets, magical tattooing and alchemy. In rural villages, especially, the people still consult their astrologer, make offerings to the spirits and, at the same time, observe Buddhist beliefs and practices, as related to their spiritual existence in the next life.

The most important category of spirits consists of the *nats*, and their propitiation is called *nat* worship. The *nats* are a heterogeneous group, incorporating a central core of 37 main or royal *nats*; the *nats* of the fields, trees, winds and rain; the house guardian *nats* and the harvest *nats*. The *nats* are chiefly evil powers who, if ignored, can bring trouble to mankind. At best, they sometimes offer protection from other more dangerous *nats*. Religious practices relating to the *nats* include propitiation through offerings of money, flowers or food at special shrines. In many villages there are women who act as spirit mediums and use their close contact with the spirit world to foretell the future, attempt to cure illness and gain the favor of the *nats* for other reasons.

To a considerable extent, belief in *nats* is interwoven into the context of Buddhism. *Nats* appear as characters in legends of the Buddha which are commonly taught to children. Scenes depicting *nats* appear on many pagoda platforms, and at times of crisis, as at a funeral, a Buddhist monk may be called so that his presence will counteract the evil influence of the spirits. The *sangha* officially condemns *nat* worship, astrology and magical beliefs as contrary to Buddhism. Their feeling is shared by many educated, urban Burmese, but belief in the spirits and the desire to know the future are still too strongly implanted to be suppressed.

CHAPTER 12

SOCIAL VALUES

Social values have been strongly influenced by the ideals set forth in the Buddhist scriptures. Religious beliefs underlie the basic outlook on life of the majority of the Burmese, guide their behavior and determine their emotional reaction to certain situations. Concepts of the self, of the nature of man and of the content of good and evil are defined in Buddhist terms (see ch. 11, Religion). The actions of individual Burmese are sometimes inconsistent with the stated ideal, however, and in many instances behavior may be purely Burmese in character and owe little or nothing to the Buddhist teachings.

The objectives of the Burmese Government in 1967 were based on the assumption that radical economic change would be pursued while keeping traditional values intact. The ethics and the methods of modern technological society, however, seem questionable to those who hold the traditional values. The success of the various government programs depends, therefore, on the ability of those in power to introduce modern ideas and reconcile them with the traditional heritage.

INFLUENCE OF RELIGION AND THE SUPERNATURAL

Buddhist teachings provide the Burmese with a general framework for the interpretation of the world and its events. For most people religion defines the ultimate meaning of life and death and serves as a guide for moral action. Some additional elements of belief, not prescribed in scripture, have developed at the village level. These elements give the principles of religion more meaning and value for the average person.

The Burmese tend to value spiritual goals more than material ones. Performing good works in this life in preparation for a higher rebirth is of greater importance to most people than the pursuit of worldly pleasures. The attainment of material well-being is valued mainly as a possible avenue for gaining religious merit through public displays of giving (ch. 11, Religion).

The act of giving for religious purposes not only brings spiritual rewards but earns social prestige. Because of the public nature of most religious ceremonies and the emphasis on the display aspect

of giving, some observers have concluded that the social value of giving to a religious cause may outweigh its spiritual value. The giver demonstrates his religious morality in this symbolic act of self-sacrifice and earns the admiration and respect of the community.

Daily adherence to the first five Buddhist precepts is the essential component of moral behavior. Most people try, to the best of their ability, to act in accordance with the principles of their moral code, but they recognize that there are occasions when strict adherence is not practical.

Mitigating circumstances may permit someone to give a misleading reply to a question and even to tell a lie, if he does so without evil intent. The same rationale makes it excusable to kill to protect one's own life, but it is a serious wrong to take a life intentionally without cause. The intent or motivation behind a violation of a precept is, in the eyes of most of the people, of greater consequence than the act itself.

The Burmese usually see no purpose in openly censuring others for wrongful actions. Buddhist teaching emphasizes the responsibility of each individual for his own actions and for the control of his own future. One need only worry about himself because the wrongdoing of others will be automatically punished by lower rebirth.

The individual who leads a relatively blameless life and follows the precepts to the best of his ability may find the belief in a reincarnated soul comforting in the face of death. Feeling that he has earned a positive store of merit, he may look forward with confidence to entering a better existence. In such circumstances the family remains calm and refrains from emotional outbursts and expressions of sorrow. To exhibit such behavior would imply that the deceased had not lived a meritorious life and, therefore, would not have a higher rebirth.

Nevertheless, death is often accompanied by fear of the unknown and by unwillingness to leave one's family and familiar surroundings. This is especially true in the case of a premature death in which the person may not have accumulated a store of merit or one in which the accumulated demerits may outweigh the compensatory acts. Such persons have no assurance of a better rebirth, and it is socially acceptable for the family of the deceased to display extreme emotionalism and grief. An accidental or violent death is considered especially abhorrent, because the restless soul of the deceased may return in the form of a *tahse* (ghost) and cause trouble in the community.

Buddhist *karma* and the *nats* (see Glossary) are both believed to have a determining influence on the life of the individual,

though he in turn may succeed in counteracting and changing both forces (see ch. 11, Religion). *Karma* has sometimes been compared to fate or destiny. It is the sum of a person's past deeds, the moral balance of good and evil. The balance that is inherited from a past incarnation may be changed by present deeds and actions, so that *karma* is not entirely immutable. The individual must accept his present life as it is, but he does have the ability to improve his moral balance for a better future.

THE ANNUAL CYCLE

In the predominantly agricultural society the major seasonal variations are viewed with concern and marked by important ceremonies and rituals. The Burmese live in a monsoonal climate where each change of season is unusually sharp, precise and spectacular (see ch. 19, Agriculture).

The most significant of all seasonal changes occurs with the onset of the moisture-bearing southwest monsoon. The most important Burmese holiday, Thingyan (Water Festival), occurs in mid-April, just before the monsoon, and dramatizes in its most spectacular features the anticipation and preparation for what is soon to come (see ch. 11, Religion).

The second ranking holiday, Thadingyut (Festival of Lights), marks the end of the rains and of the Buddhist period of religious retreat. To the Burmese it means that the time of reduced social activity and heaviest work is past. The colorful symbols of the happy occasion are the thousands of tiny lights that are displayed everywhere on Thadingyut eve.

Dhammasetkya (see Glossary), the beginning of the period of religious retreat, occurs in mid-July and has considerable significance in terms of altered social patterns. The Burmese period of retreat is marked by intensified religious observances and proscriptions of most social activities, including marriages, festivals and other public celebrations.

The sharpest contrast with the spirit and activity of the retreat season occurs during the dry postharvest season, which lasts from February through April or May. There is little gainful work for the farmer during this time. Villagers may complain of this fast and express their eagerness for some kind of economically productive activity. There are many farmers, however, who welcome this season and feel that they deserve a period of relaxation after the intensely busy harvest. The dry season becomes the ideal time to visit relatives in other areas, attend festivals, make pilgrimages and hold *shinbyu* and *natwin* ceremonies (see ch. 7, Family; Glossary). The farmer also uses this time to repair and refurnish his home and mend his tools and irrigation channels.

The annual cycle is measured on a form of the lunar calendar, and months are divided into the waxing and waning phase of the moon. Under this lunar system the number of days in the year falls 12 or 13 short of 365, a deficiency made up in alternate years by observing a double month of Waso, which occurs during July and August. Dates are expressed in terms of the waxing and waning moons and in years of a mythical Burmese era; the year 1967 of the Christian era corresponds to 1328–29 B.E. As shown by its persistent popular usage throughout the country, the lunar calendar is a valued Burmese tradition.

The Buddhist duty days do not punctuate the year in a fixed cycle but are otherwise analogous to the Christian Sabbath. Ideally, these days give the Buddhist a chance to observe additional religious precepts and to visit the monastery. In fact, duty days do not significantly change the behavior of the average person, except during the season of religious retreat, when he may intensify his religious observances.

The universe is seen by the Burmese as an ordered system in which events can be accurately predicted. Man must plan his life within this system in order to make the most of his present incarnation. The practice of astrology is extremely important to many people and helps them to ascertain the most auspicious time for performing every major action. The importance of astrology is shown by the fact that the country was declared independent at a moment considered auspicious by astrologers.

Each person has his own set of auspicious days for beginning and ending events, as well as a number of more generalized lucky and unlucky days. A person who wishes to know the best time for some venture will take his *zada* (horoscope) to the local astrologer for consultation. Almost every rural Burmese has a *zada*, consisting of a tablet on which are inscribed vital personal data of an astrological nature. The astrologer interprets the information written on the *zada* and makes predictions on the basis of his findings.

Some authorities have suggested that many Burmese depend on astrology because it removes some of the uncertainty from decisionmaking and reduces personal responsibility for a possible failure.

Life, for the majority of the people, is governed by the calendar rather than by the clock. Work as well as leisure may continue, uninterrupted, for long periods of time. The farmer must complete a great amount of work in a limited amount of time during planting and harvest, and he will spend long hours in the fields for many consecutive days. When the harvest is over or the planting is done, there is an equally long and uninterrupted period of inac-

tivity and relaxation. Under these conditions the measurement of hours and minutes has little relevance. Precision and punctuality are not valued, unless astrological calculations are involved. This attitude has caused leisurely business hours in the cities and has reduced efficiency in production.

Attitudes toward time and punctuality are related to those concerning the relative merits of work and leisure. Some observers have described the Burmese as lazy, indolent and lacking in motivation and have compared them unfavorably with the supposedly more industrious Chinese and Indians. These judgments must be weighed against the background of Burmese economic life. An abundance of arable land, a benevolent climate and an almost certain annual harvest have provided insurance against famine and crushing poverty. The traditional expression, "No one starves in Burma," correctly implies that wants and needs are easily met. The Burmese work hard when the need arises, as in the busy agricultural seasons. Most people, however see no reason to do more than this, and they feel no pressure to try new farming techniques, invent new methods or increase their holdings. As Buddhists they attach no virtue to work for its own sake. It does not bring them social prestige in this life, and it does not assure salvation in the next.

Except for a few spectator entertainments which include bullock races and dramatic performances, leisure-time activities tend to be relatively unstructured, especially in rural life. The concept of competitive sports is not entirely absent and has been reinforced through exposure to Western culture. Traditional concepts of competition, however, tend to center on the principle of gambling rather than on defeating an opponent. The Southeast Asian game of kickball, called *chinlon* in Burma, is enthusiastically played by groups of young men. The mildly competitive aspect of *chinlon*, however, appears only in the relative skill with which the noncompeting teams are able to keep the ball in flight. Direct competition in rural communities is more often expressed in the form of monetary wagers at cattle races and cockfights, but some dual and team sports are gaining popularity in the cities.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

The modern social structure allows considerable status mobility. High status is frequently achieved rather than ascribed. This is true in both the rural and urban societies, though they have different systems of status achievement (see ch. 6, Social Structure).

The presence of such a flexible and open social structure influences the attitudes and aspirations of the maturing individual. The Burmese can claim few privileges or rights solely on the basis of

inherited membership in a particular class, group or family. He must strive as an individual to establish his own place in the status hierarchy, and he does not even inherit a family name to help or hinder his efforts (see ch. 7, Family). Despite the relatively class-free society, important distinctions are made in social rank. As a result of this the individual must attempt to judge the relative status of every other individual with whom he comes in contact in order to conform to the etiquette of superordinate-subordinate behavior. This judgment is made primarily in terms of relative individual achievement.

The average person may experience great insecurity in social interaction if he and the other participants have not already established a long history of mutual evaluation. This insecurity may be a factor in the behavior that is characterized by the Burmese as *ah-nah-de*. Westerners sometimes interpret *ah-nah-de* as shyness or reticence. The constraints of *ah-nah-de* do not appear in intimate, personal interaction and are only rarely seen among peers and age mates. They occur between status unequals and in interpersonal relations when the people involved do not know each other well. Even if the individual were motivated to exhibit a degree of assertiveness, he might restrain himself initially to ensure the balance of a developing relationship or because he is uncertain of the other person's status. The lesser or the junior in any social situation is expected to manifest similar *ah-nah-de* behavior toward his superior.

The determinants and cues for *ah-nah-de* are rarely revealed in such things as clothing, name or other outward symbols of rank. They are more frequently derived from subtle clues in the course of social interaction itself. A newcomer in the village may recognize the village elder only by the reticence of other individuals in his presence.

The Burmese is keenly aware of his personal worth as it is measured by society. In the urban environment especially, the individual who is highly motivated to make his mark on society is also sensitive to a proper evaluation of his personal status. This sensitivity has been heightened by the feeling of social degradation which urban Burmese often experienced in colonial society. The careful regard with which the individual may treat all others is part of a reciprocal relationship, in which his own personal status is similarly regarded and preserved.

The individual early in life becomes aware of the kind of conduct for which society holds him responsible. Children are encouraged to conform to standards of good behavior in an atmosphere that is extremely permissive. The people tend to think of children as helpless miniature adults, with abilities, skills and knowledge

that will develop naturally as byproducts of growth. Few specific demands are made of children, except that they conform to standards of respectful behavior toward their elders and that they avoid actions that would bring shame to the family.

This is a culture in which physical punishment or threats of it play almost no part in socialization. Several village studies have shown that spanking is not unknown but is very rarely exercised. One study depicted a young boy who was slapped for accidentally causing a bicycle to fall on an infant and who felt personal shame and anguish so great that it caused semihysteria. This type of punishment for a juvenile misdeed would be considered cruel by Burmese standards.

The patterns of interaction established within the household are gradually extended to the larger community as the maturing individual broadens his social contacts. His actions and attitudes toward others will be influenced by the meticulous regard for status differences that he learned primarily through parental example. The correct forms of respect and deference are to be anticipated in every social situation. Even ordinary terms of address reflect the rank ordering of society that the individual has come to recognize as an essential part of social interaction.

Verbal threats or other strong sanctions occasionally may be used to enforce conformity to social norms. Normally, however, it is the desire of the individual to achieve acceptance and status that acts as the most effective motive behind conformity.

The average Burmese is aware of the necessity for observing the correct forms of social behavior. He is also probably seeking to improve his own status and has his personal self-advancement foremost in his mind. In general, the socialization process conditions the Burmese to seek his own self-fulfillment and to feel comparatively little responsibility for others.

Buddhism, which emphasizes the individual's responsibility for his own actions, tends to reinforce a theme of individualism. Life in the closely knit, stable village community, with its demands for cooperative effort, provides a countering force, which offsets this individualism. Where the traditional village structure has been destroyed or greatly weakened, however, as in Lower Burma, the individualistic aspect of Burmese character becomes predominant. This is also true in urban communities where bureaucratic interaction and relative social anonymity have become customary.

This strong spirit of individualism may have important implications for national development. The idea of working cooperatively to improve the nation economically and socially has little meaning for many Burmese who feel that only individuals can

be improved. They also tend to feel that people employed by the government are essentially more concerned with improving themselves than with improving the country.

In old Burma, public office was viewed primarily as a means of personal advancement rather than as a position of public trust and responsibility. Those who have sought to enhance their position through office usually have not been publicly condemned as long as their actions remained within reasonable bounds. These limits were set by long tradition, predating colonial times.

The drive for personal status has an influence on and finds expression in the basic loyalties of the individual. Burmese political life provides the best illustration of this. The outstanding characteristic of political behavior is a seemingly unavoidable competition for personal status and power. The most important factor in political life is the individual personality rather than political parties or party ideologies (see ch. 17, Political Values and Attitudes). The nucleus of each clique, faction, party or movement is one individual who receives the personal loyalties of his followers, until some other individual considers himself strong enough to break away and form a splinter faction. This process repeats itself many times and results in many rival factions with almost identical policies and ideologies.

RURAL-URBAN DIFFERENCES

The Burmese who grew up in one of the urban centers or adjusted to life in an urban environment may have been steeped in a tradition of Western law, education and speech. He is often also familiar with Indian and Chinese commercial practices, religious customs, food habits, dress and language. Some cosmopolitans are more familiar with these foreign cultural elements than with the traditional Burmese culture that is still predominant in most rural areas.

Rural migrants to the city and often their grown children sometimes live in small, closely knit communities, which are similar in structure and function to their native villages. They may have few contacts with people outside of their community and do not really participate in the urban culture. Under these circumstances city dwellers retain their traditional rural values, attitudes and customs. As their children gain a modern secular education, however, they tend to reject many of the parents' traditional ideas and to become true urbanites.

The metropolitan Burmese, those who are full participants in the urban culture, have been divorced from any indigenous traditions. Modern education, which was almost unavailable to villagers until recently, has been largely responsible for rural-urban differ-

ences. Government efforts to extend education into remote areas may help to diminish this rural-urban gulf. Various economic and social programs have been introduced into rural areas with the hope that they will stimulate the farmer to identify more completely with other Burmese and to accept the elements of changes in culture. In general, however, the isolate of rural communities may continue for some time because of the still feeble impact of the mass communication media in areas far from the centers of national life.

Most farmers rarely have occasion to visit any large city. Their needs are few, and any subsistence items that they require can be obtained in nearby towns. Fear of dacoits and robbers makes farmers reluctant to travel long distances, though the prospect of a pilgrimage to some religious shrine sometimes provides enough motivation for such a journey. A pilgrimage to the Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon or the Mahamuni Shrine in Mandalay may be the experience of a lifetime for the villager.

Villagers generally are impressed with the immorality of city life. The relative freedom of contact between members of opposite sexes, accepted in urban society, offends the villager's traditional views of sexual propriety. According to these views, unmarried couples should never seek situations of complete privacy; they must always be in the company of several other people. The activities of women in the city are considered especially questionable to the villager. Many rural people have heard rumors that urban women take special medicines to prevent conception so that they may live an immoral life.

Some of the noticeable examples of urban technology are fascinating to rural people. Automobiles are particularly attractive to them, and village children make clay toys in imitation of the jeeps that they see occasionally. Automobiles and most of the other material symbols of modern urban life are beyond the means of most farmers. Any tendency to feel resentment at being denied these things is counteracted by several cultural factors. Buddhism teaches that the material things of life are of no real value and that only spiritual goals are important. A devout Buddhist is conditioned to feel no envy for those who enjoy wealth and luxury.

A long history of unrest in the countryside—warfare, rebellions and dacoity—has always acted as a deterrent to the acquisition of valuables that cannot be easily hidden. Many farmers have a traditional suspicion of government and feel that material wealth would be subject to confiscation as it was during the time of the Burmese monarchy. Most rural people, therefore, view the material goods of modern life in the city as things that are foreign to

their way of life and completely different from anything they might wish to have.

The relatively sophisticated urbanite often sees little to admire in the life of the farmer. The most highly valued positions in urban areas have been those in government or in the professions, where verbal skills are important (see ch. 9, Education). Occupations that require physical labor have been considered degrading, and farmers are thought to be ignorant, inarticulate laborers. A major problem for higher education is to instill an appreciation for physical skills. The success of many government programs depends on the willingness of trained personnel to apply and demonstrate their technical knowledge in practical situations.

The attitudes of urbanites toward villagers are often apparent in the views they express concerning rural religious beliefs and practices. In the city, religion tends to emphasize a philosophical or rational Buddhism, which appeals to people who wish to reconcile their religious beliefs to a scientific view of reality. This is done at the expense of some of the beliefs of the traditional religious system that are cast aside as mere superstitions. Villagers who still find these traditions meaningful are considered backward and ignorant.

Urban Burmese sometimes defensively ridicule many of the traditional customs and beliefs in the hope that these practices will not be associated with them. The villager who prays to Buddha or wears protective tattoos may be scorned for not knowing that Buddha hears no prayers and for not understanding that medicine is more effective than charms in preventing illness. In general, the educated city dweller also deemphasizes the *nats* and the other animistic aspects of traditional Burmese religion.

Urban values and attitudes have not been entirely separated from the indigenous culture. The cities, except Rangoon, tend in many ways to be semirural settlements. Fewer houses in Rangoon than in other cities have coconuts hung in their corners in tribute to the house spirit, but not many people would completely deny the existence of such spirits.

Rangoon has an unusual position in respect to the extent and frequency of contact with foreign peoples and traditions that distinguishes it from the rest of the country. The city has supported a very large Indian and Chinese population and has also been the major port of entry for both air and sea travel. Residents of Rangoon have always had the greatest exposure to foreign cultures and ideas. As a result of the exposure they have been the most receptive to changes in culture. The Burmese in Rangoon have also felt most keenly the pressures of living and competing with large groups of foreigners, and they almost always have developed hostile attitudes toward them.

For many years the urban Burmese were in direct competition with the Indian and Pakistani population. This situation resulted in acts of violence that were directed at the Indian community (see ch. 5, Ethnic Groups and Languages). Antagonism has manifested itself most commonly in religious disputes, especially with Indians and Pakistanis of Islamic faith. Although Buddhist-Moslem differences have accentuated hostilities, the Burmese people's resentment of Indians is too deeply rooted to discriminate at the abstract level of religious philosophies. They are held in contempt for their willingness to work at menial tasks and for their often low standard of living and resented for their financial shrewdness and trading ability.

The Chinese, who have never been as numerous in Burma as the Indians, have not experienced as much disapproval. Economic competition between the Burmese and the Chinese has been less pronounced, and their physical similarity has made the Chinese more acceptable. Chinese acquisitiveness and acumen in business affairs are recognized by the Burmese, and their lack of concern with religion causes some people to feel that the Chinese are misguided. They are, however, regarded as ethnic cousins, and their generally high standard of living leaves them free from the contempt that has been directed at the Indians.

Modern Burmese attitudes toward these minorities and toward many Westerners are the indirect result of the colonial experience and subsequent independence. Before colonial occupation the Burmese enjoyed a position of dominance over the ethnic minorities that constantly reinforced their natural feelings of superiority. In 1824, the time of the first war with the British, Burma was the principal independent state in Southeast Asia. The sharp reversal in national roles, brought about by their defeat at the hands of the British, was a psychological shock for the proud Burmese. Their whole value system was suddenly made questionable by the failure of their culture to provide the answers to the problems of colonial life. Customary law and its moral validations became meaningless in confronting an imposed foreign tradition. Much accommodation was necessary to rationalize what was felt to be an intolerable situation. Independence brought a resurgent national spirit, which was manifested recently in the religious revival of U Nu's administration and in the strong nationalist character of the Ne Win government.

Nationalism has made acceptance of external ideas and influence increasingly and consciously selective. Foreign groups that remain in the country will probably feel a continually reinforced pressure to conform to Burmese customs and values and to forget their own way of life.

SECTION II. POLITICAL

CHAPTER 13

THE GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM

In 1967 the country was ruled by the Revolutionary Council of high military officers which, under the leadership of General Ne Win, commander of the armed forces, had assumed the supreme executive, legislative and judicial powers of government in 1962. Proclaiming that parliamentary democracy had failed in Burma, the Council ruled by decree through an apparatus of control that was superimposed upon the constitutionally established organs of administration. One of the Council's announced aims was to adapt progressively the governmental system to what it considered the special needs of Burma.

The governmental system in effect when the Ne Win regime came to power in 1962 was based on a national constitution adopted at the time of independence from the British. The constitution embodied many concepts and mechanisms derived from the Western world and, in particular, reflected the great influence of British constitutional practices with which the Burmese political leaders were thoroughly familiar. It established a framework for government that included an elected legislature, a separate judiciary and a parliamentary executive responsible to the legislature. Viewed in the light of the country's relatively short political experience under British rule, the Constitution represented a superstructure of Western concepts of law, justice, politics and administration, resting on a long-established Burmese cultural, religious and philosophical base.

The Ne Win government suspended the Constitution in 1962 and since then has established whatever new institutions and practices it deemed appropriate. These measures were taken in the form of laws, agreed upon and promulgated by the Revolutionary Council. One of their cumulative effects was to exclude former civilian political leaders from participation in the political processes of the country and to concentrate the power to make all decisions of any importance in a small group of chosen men, most of them military (see ch. 14, Political Dynamics).

BACKGROUND OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM

When the Europeans entered the Asian scene Burma was ruled by kings (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). Ruling without any kind of parliament and advised only by a royal council, a strong king was an absolute monarch, governing by edicts. There were certain restricting influences on this absolute power, however, such as a scattered population, the absence of a competent administrative structure, poor communications and inadequate transportation facilities. These, in practical effect, limited the full execution of power.

The administration was carried out with the help of quasi-feudal governors and of *myoza* who were appointed by the king to non-hereditary posts. The *myoza* were of special importance because they were charged with collecting taxes in the villages under their jurisdiction. The villages, although more social than administrative units, formed the basis of the state. A group of villages was ordinarily termed a *myo* or township. The *myothugyi* (headman) enjoyed a large degree of local autonomy. All these officials, from governor to headman, were responsible for keeping the peace, collecting taxes, raising levies in time of war and general supervision of their territories.

British colonial government in Burma was characterized by a laissez faire economic policy, which facilitated profound changes in the economic and social structure of the country, and a political system designed, at least until after World War I, to ensure the British a practical monopoly of power.

The British introduced certain of their own political, legal and administrative concepts and institutions which were new to the country. Although the tradition of individualism was already deeply rooted in Burmese culture, the emphasis on the rights and freedoms of the individual inherent in British political and governmental practice helped to reinforce this tradition. The introduction of the British concept of contract and the practice of contractual relations facilitated the economic development of Burma insofar as the economy was related to that of the Western world.

The introduction of a legal code, the creation of a modern civil service and the introduction of parliamentary government were measures which again, although conflicting with certain values in Burmese culture, provided a basis on which to build a more modern state. Finally, the British completed the conversion of local government in Burma from a system based on personal loyalties to a system based on territorial administration.

The early years of the twentieth century saw a rise of Burmese nationalism and a demand for self-government, if not independence. Great Britain's 1917 promise of self-government for the

Indian Empire added strength to similar Burmese aspirations, and in 1923 the British extended to Burma the dyarchical system established by the India Act of 1919. Under this system, two elected Burmese ministers were fully responsible for some of the less essential phases of government, whereas the more important matters were reserved to two members of the governor's council.

With the introduction of dyarchy, a national legislative council, a majority of the members of which were popularly elected, was created, and suffrage was granted to all those 18 years of age and over who were able to meet certain property requirements. These measures were aimed toward self-government, but the Burmese contended that they did not go far enough. Dissatisfaction was widespread, and less than a fourth of the electorate chose to exercise their franchise. Discontent culminated in the appearance of the Thakin movement in the early 1930's, a peasant rebellion, student demonstrations and anti-Indian riots. The people displayed a growing willingness to resort to forceful methods in order to implement their political demands (see ch. 14, Political Dynamics).

Faced by a rising tide of nationalist sentiment, the British sought to allay popular discontent. In 1937 Burma was separated from India and became part of the British Empire, receiving a new constitution based on the Government of Burma Act of 1935. Constitutional progress was particularly evidenced by a greater degree of autonomy and parliamentary government. More responsibilities were given to the legislature, leaving mainly foreign affairs and defense in the hands of the British governor. Although half of the people were now enfranchised, the Burmese were dissatisfied with the degree of power still formally reserved to the governor, and the new constitution was unpopular from the outset. The period between 1937 and the outbreak of World War II was characterized by growing hostility between the governor and the legislature and by repeated outbreaks of popular violence.

World War II interrupted the course of constitutional development. When Burma fell to the Japanese, almost all the British and Indian elements in the government escaped to India, where they set up a government in exile. The majority of the Burmese officials remained in the country and had the experience of the Japanese occupation. Resentment against the exactions of the Japanese military administration grew steadily. As a conciliatory measure, the Japanese appointed the Independence Preparatory Commission charged with drafting a constitution. In August 1943 Burma was proclaimed an independent and sovereign state under a constitution that gave almost exclusive powers to an Adipati (Head of State) in which office Ba Maw was installed.

He was the supreme executive and appointed ministers to the Cabinet, who were both individually and collectively responsible to him. The members of the privy council were also appointed by the Adipati and were to advise him in matters of public importance referred to them. The Adipati was also the supreme legislator, although in theory this legislative power was to be exercised only after consultation with the Cabinet. Moreover, he appointed the judges of the courts, the officials of the state services and the auditor-general. The form of government was a virtual dictatorship, under close Japanese surveillance.

On the military side, Aung San helped, as commander of the armed forces, to change the situation to Burma's advantage. He organized resistance movements in an Anti-Fascist Organization, made secret contact with the Allied forces under Lord Mountbatten and was of considerable aid in the reconquest of Burma by the Allies in 1945.

The end of World War II saw a renewed struggle for the division of power between the people of Burma and the returning British. This time the people were determined to be satisfied with nothing but the highest prize—complete independence. Largely as a result of the efforts of Aung San (and late U Nu) and Prime Minister Attlee and the British Labor Government, an agreement was finally worked out in January 1947. It called for the election of a constituent assembly to frame a constitution and raised the question whether Burma would become a member of the British Commonwealth.

In April 1947 elections were held for the Constituent Assembly and were carried out without any noteworthy incidents. About two-thirds of the members represented Burma proper, and the remainder were from the Frontier Areas and minority ethnic groups. The Assembly adopted unanimously the final draft of the constitution in September 1947, and early in December a Burma Independence Bill was passed in the British Parliament. This Act went into effect on January 4, 1948, giving birth to an independent republic, outside the British Commonwealth and known as the Union of Burma.

The new government headed by Prime Minister Nu made great efforts to establish an effective constitutional regime but was seriously handicapped by civil disorders from the very start. Troubles were intensified by demands for autonomy on the part of ethnic minorities and inability to develop an agreed administrative structure that would give practical effect to the broad principles of federalism recognized by the Constitution. In Burma proper plans to reform and modernize the system of local government

were largely frustrated by political rivalries and lack of security in many areas.

The principles of popular sovereignty embodied in the Constitution were applied in a number of election campaigns, which were won by Prime Minister Nu. Beset on all sides by political feuding, however, he was not able to exercise effectively the power his electoral victories offered him. On constitutional questions, his commitment to making Buddhism the official religion of the state and his apparent willingness to meet minority demands for a more loosely organized federal structure diminished his popular support. These factors, together with his government's inability to stamp out insurgency and sustain economic progress, resulted in the armed forces under General Ne Win taking over the government early in 1962 and putting an end to rule under the Constitution.

CONSTITUTION

The Constitution, held in suspension by the Ne Win government in 1967, opens with the statement that Burma is a sovereign, independent republic, known as the Union of Burma. The Union comprises the territories of Burma proper, the Shan State, the Kachin State, the Karenni State (now the Kayah State) and two special areas: the Chin Special Division and the Kawthulay Region, the latter of which was transformed into the Kawthule State in 1964. New component states may be created by an act of Parliament and with the consent of the existing states affected.

The name Union of Burma suggests a federal state structure, but the situation established by the Constitution can best be described as a cross between a federal and a unitary state with Burma proper directly under the central government and the other territories endowed with some measure of autonomy under a division of responsibility and powers between the central and state governments. The Constitution grants to states the right to secede from the Union under certain circumstances. Kachin State and Kawthule State are specifically denied this right.

The Constitution mentions four main organs of government: a president, a parliament, a Union government and a Union judiciary. The overall structure of these organs clearly shows the influence of British constitutional practice. The separation of powers is less rigid than in the United States.

The president, the titular head of state, is elected for a 5-year term by secret vote of both chambers of Parliament sitting in joint session. He is conceived as a nonpolitical figure and is not responsible for the exercise of his powers and functions to any chamber of Parliament or court. The real executive power rests with a prime minister and his Cabinet (that is, the Union Govern-

ment), who are collectively responsible to the Chamber of Deputies.

Legislative powers have been vested exclusively in the two chambers of Parliament. Bills may originate in either the Chamber of Deputies or the Chamber of Nationalities, with the exception of money bills, which can be introduced only in the Chamber of Deputies. Parliament has the sole power to amend the Constitution.

The independence of the Union judiciary is guaranteed by the Constitution. The judges of the higher courts are appointed by the president with the approval of the Parliament sitting in joint session. The courts are secured against any interference by the Chamber of Deputies and are subject only to the Constitution and the laws, of which they are the final arbiter (see ch. 25, Public Order and Safety).

In its second chapter the Constitution deals with fundamental rights, whereas other constitutional rights are enumerated in a separate chapter on the directive principles of state policy. The difference lies in the fact that the former group can be enforced by law, whereas the latter have no legal force, since they are intended only for the general guidance of the government. For this reason, such rights as the right to work, to maintenance in old age and sickness, to rest, leisure and to education, although stated in the Constitution, cannot be enforced in any court of law. As in other constitutions these principles purport to give a set of moral precepts, the significance of which lies in their educative values.

Under the Constitution, citizenship is conferred by virtue of birth and parentage or, in some instances, birth and prior residence in Burma. Equality before the law is granted to all citizens, irrespective of birth, religion, sex or race. Suffrage is bestowed upon all citizens who have attained 18 years of age, and the imposition of any property qualifications as a condition for this right is specifically prohibited. There is provision for the preservation of the civil liberties, including due process of law, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of organization, the right to reside and settle in any part of the Union and the prohibition of slavery. The last-named right is not intended to prevent the government from imposing compulsory service for public purposes.

In the sections on rights relating to religion, freedom of conscience and freedom of religion are granted to all persons, subject to considerations of public order, morality and health. A section that recognized the special position of Buddhism as the faith of the great majority of Burmese citizens was amended in 1961 to make Buddhism the state religion of the Union (see ch. 11, Religion).

As to criminal law, ex post facto laws and punishments are prohibited. In cases of violation of fundamental rights the Constitution enables the Supreme Court to issue writs, such as habeas corpus and mandamus. These legal remedies cannot be suspended except in times of war, insurrection or grave emergency. There is a clear distinction between the fundamental rights of citizens and noncitizens. Many economic restrictions are obtained for noncitizens. This distinction was probably an intentional one, designed to make attainment of Burmese citizenship by the many Chinese and Indian nationals somewhat difficult and to allow the future government to act as it saw fit through immigration and alien registration laws.

The Constitution deals with the relationship of the state to private property, and herein the socialist and welfare state orientation of the constitutional fathers is most apparent. The section on fundamental rights guarantees the rights of private property and private initiative in the economic sphere, but the doctrine that these rights are not to be used to the detriment of the general public is also enunciated. The Constitution also declares that private property may be limited, expropriated, nationalized or acquired by the state when required by the public interest.

There is a specific declaration that the state is the ultimate owner of all lands. Large landholdings are banned, and the state possesses the right to regulate the maximum size of private landholdings, to abolish or alter land tenures, to resume possession of any land, or to distribute land for collective or cooperative agricultural undertakings. There is no constitutional provision for the compensation or reimbursement of those affected by a possible exercise of this power.

Two national symbols mentioned in the Constitution are the national flag and the official language. The flag (red with a blue canton in which there is a five-pointed, large white star with five smaller white stars between its points) symbolizes the unity of the state. The official language is Burmese, but the use of the English language is expressly permitted. The Constitution also gives special attention to the international relations of the country, affirming among other things that, its relations with other countries, Burma renounces war as an instrument of national policy and accepts instead the generally recognized principles of international law as its rule of conduct.

A bill proposing an amendment to the Constitution may be introduced in either chamber of Parliament and must be passed by a two-thirds vote of both chambers sitting in joint session. Where a proposed amendment affects either the revenues or legislative powers of one of the states, the further approval of a majority of

the members present and voting from the state or states affected is necessary. Amendment seems relatively easy in comparison with procedure in the United States.

The Supreme Court is vested with the power of final interpretation of the Constitution and other laws. Since the Constitution is drafted in broad, general terms, it is to be given a liberal and flexible interpretation. The Supreme Court also has the power of advisory opinion whenever, in the opinion of the president, an important question of law has arisen.

STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

When the armed forces, led by their commander, General Ne Win, took over the government in 1962 supreme power was assumed by a Revolutionary Council consisting of 16 high-ranking military officers. General Ne Win became chairman of the group. The President of Burma, the Prime Minister and the Chief Justice of the Union were removed from office *de facto* by imprisonment, and both chambers of the Parliament were dissolved.

The Revolutionary Council used a proclamation vesting full executive, legislative and judicial powers in General Ne Win as Chairman of the Council. In amplification of this act the Chairman decreed that the title "President," wherever occurring in the country's laws, would be deemed to have been changed to the title "Chairman of the Revolutionary Council," and that all executive actions of the government would be considered as taken in the name of the Chairman of the Revolutionary Council. In a statement of general policy he announced that all existing laws would remain in force until repealed or amended and that courts of law would continue to function and exercise their existing powers.

Soon after the coup the Revolutionary Council formed a new Union Government to replace Prime Minister Nu and his Cabinet ministers. General Ne Win was announced as Prime Minister and holder of several of the more important portfolios, including that of Minister of Defense. With the exception of one civilian, who was named Minister of Foreign Affairs, the members of the new Cabinet, of whom there were seven, were drawn from the membership of the Revolutionary Council.

Below this closely knit group where the combined executive and legislative powers of government were concentrated, everyday administration continued to be a function of the constitutionally established ministries and other agencies of the state. These activities, however, were supervised and made to conform to the needs of the campaign against insurgency and to the socialist aims of the Revolutionary Council by a control apparatus consist-

ing of Security and Administrative Committees, organized at each level of the government down to the towns, and appointed by the Revolutionary Council. All of the committees had military members who were assigned to no other duties. Uniform operating procedures at all levels and in all parts of the country were prescribed in 1966. In addition to the control function, the government used committee membership as a means of indoctrinating local leaders and training them to plan and promote economic and social development projects.

Little changed in structure since colonial days, the administrative organization developed under the Constitution consists of the central ministries, separate agencies and a hierarchy of territorial administrative subdivisions reaching down to the level of the village. In 1967 there were some 25 ministries among which the specific task of government were distributed, plus ministries representing each of the States and the Chin Special Division. The ministries in turn were organized to form over 40 departments. When it is realized that Burma before World War II was governed through only 10 departments, the great expansion of governmental machinery and the tendency toward compartmentalization since independence are apparent.

In addition to the regular ministries and their subordinate departments, there is a group of boards, corporations and agencies formed since World War II in connection with the government's development plans and programs (see ch. 18, Character and Structure of the Economy). These organizations are technically within one or the other of the ministries. However, each regulates its own personnel and is not subject to the usual government service rules and regulations.

The heads of the various ministries constitute the Cabinet, and it has been the ordinary practice for a single minister to hold a number of portfolios. In the Ne Win government the considerations governing the combination of portfolios appear to have been as much personal and political as related to administrative convenience and unity. The senior permanent civil servant in each ministry is ordinarily ranked as Ministerial Secretary. Collectively, these are known as the Secretariat. They meet on occasions to advise on administrative procedures, and in effect form a permanent nucleus of government, keeping the system running regardless of who the ministers may be.

The judicial structure in Burma is essentially similar to that in the United States (see ch. 25, Public Order and Safety). Both systems provide for a national supreme court and both have inferior federal courts. Both provide for a concomitant system of state courts, but mainly for reasons of economy no independent

state judicial system as authorized by the Constitution has evolved in Burma.

The Constitution makes the Supreme Court, headed by the chief justice of the Union, the country's highest tribunal. Unlike the United States Supreme Court, it has no original jurisdiction and functions solely as a court of appeals. This appellate jurisdiction, so far as it relates to the constitutionality of any law, cannot be circumscribed or abolished by Parliament. Decisions of the Supreme Court are binding on all lower courts, whether Union or State, and it is authorized to give opinions on the constitutionality of proposed legislation, whether federal or state. A High Court was established by the Constitution as the second highest judicial organ. It was given original and appellate jurisdiction, including original jurisdiction in all disputes between the union and a state or between one state and another. Appeals from decisions of the High Court may be taken to the Supreme Court.

In 1962 the Ne Win government abolished both the Supreme and High Courts, appointing a Chief Court as final court of appeal. The act charged the Chief Court with all the duties and gave it all the powers provided for the Supreme and High Courts under existing laws. A Chief Judge and five associates were named to the bench.

The lower courts, in descending order, are the district courts, the subdivisional courts (sessions courts) and the township courts (magistrates' courts). Appointees to these courts are federal officials, and all hold their office on good behavior. Administrative supervision over the activities of these lower courts is exercised by the Chief Justice of the High Court. People's Courts, which have jurisdiction over offenses such as black-marketing and violations of the socialist decrees of the Ne Win government, have been added to the lower court structure (see ch. 25, Public Order and Safety).

GOVERNMENT IN THE CONSTITUENT UNITS

Burma proper, with the majority community, is directly under the central or union government and under the Constitution is directly represented in the Union Parliament. A more complicated combination of direct and indirect powers and responsibilities marks the governance of the five constituent units: the Shan State, the Kachin State, the Kayah State, the Kawthule State and the Chin Hills Division.

In each of the unit States the power to legislate on State affairs is vested by the Constitution in a State council. This organ's membership consists of all the members of the Parliament's Chamber of Nationalities elected from that particular state. The terms of

office of the State councils, therefore, coincide with those of Parliament, and shifts of power and policy within the latter usually can be translated readily into corresponding changes on the State level.

In a pattern familiar to most federal governments, separate spheres of legislative competence are established for the national Parliament on the one hand and for the several state councils on the other. This division is accomplished by means of Schedules attached to the Constitution. These include three Legislative Lists: the Union Legislative List, which spells out the powers granted to Parliament; the State Legislative List, which specifies the powers assigned to the State Councils; and the State Revenue List, which reserves to the states revenue from a variety of excises and fees.

Constitutional provisions permit parliamentary action on subjects normally within the jurisdiction of the States. Should two or more State Councils request that the Union Parliament regulate reserved matters within those states, Parliament may do so. Any State Council may surrender any of its territories or any of its powers and rights to the Union. Any provision of a State law which conflicts with a properly enacted provision of a Union law is inoperative.

Executive authority and final administrative responsibility for each of the States are vested by the Constitution in the head of the State who serves, on the national level, in the Union Government as a minister for that particular State. This official is appointed by the president of the Union from the membership of the appropriate State Council. Also chosen from the membership of the State Council is the Cabinet of State ministers, who aid and advise the head of the State in the exercise of his functions.

A variety of factors have delayed development of fully functioning State administrative structures. Burma proper is administered directly by the Union Government. The Shan State, having been governed separately by the British, had a reasonably well-developed administrative structure of its own at the time of independence. The other States have been in the process of slowly creating the machinery necessary to assume the tasks of policy implementation. In the meantime, they have relied on Union officials and Union funds wherever necessary.

With the exception of the Shan State, none of the Constituent units had a developed judicial system in 1948 when the new Constitution provided that each of the States would create its own courts separate from those of the national government. Considerations of economy, however, prevented the creation of such systems. To remedy the situation and to introduce a measure of uniformity,

Parliament in 1954 passed the State Courts Act, which transferred the authority to establish State courts to the Union Government.

Thus, in each of the States, including the Shan State, the federal courts serve also as a State judiciary. The structure is therefore uniform and coincides exactly with that of the federal courts. The highest level of State judiciary is the district court, followed in descending order by the subdivision courts and the township courts. The judges of these three courts, although sitting and functioning as a State judiciary, are Union justices in terms of tenure and civil service rights and are paid by the Union Government.

Upon seizing power in 1962, the Ne Win government dissolved the existing State Councils and named new State Supreme Councils, each with a high-ranking military officer as a central member. The chairmen of these councils were invested with the powers and functions formerly held by the heads of the respective States. To strengthen control and unify governmental processes, the State budgets were consolidated with those of the central government, and various autonomous laws in effect in the several States were repealed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Traditionally, there was little interference by the royal court and the central administration at the local level. The people in the villages had a sense of loyalty to their headmen, but the headmen did not rule by virtue of authority vested in them from above. Whatever authority they had was exercised by virtue of their hereditary position and the operation of traditional village folkways which specified that the people should go to their headmen for arbitration and should accept their leadership. When the British annexed the country they introduced administrative and legal changes to bring the Burmese system more in accord with Western concepts and practices.

Some of the basic changes introduced by the British were to change the status of headman from hereditary leader to salaried government official and to change the old village township from a social unit based on interpersonal relationships to an administrative unit based on space. With these changes came new laws, new regulations and new requirements, all promulgated from outside the village by the colonial administration. At the same time penalties and fines for noncompliance were introduced. The duty of enforcing these laws and penalties at the village level devolved on the headman.

The basic considerations of British administration were the establishment of law and order and the collection of land revenues. During their stay in Burma the British sought at least two addi-

tional objectives on the local level: provision of services (schools, hospitals, roads, lighting, sewerage and similar services) and at least a rudimentary training for the people in the practice of self-government. The civil service, which was entrusted with the administration of local affairs, did fulfill the first objectives of local government—that of providing services, maintaining law and order and collecting revenues—but the educational value of local government was at best minimal. British administration and reforms evoked little enthusiasm or participation, and when the British withdrew there was no widespread appreciation of the meaning of local self-government and its concomitant responsibilities.

The British divided Burma proper into seven Divisions, and these remain, with minor changes, the administrative divisions of independent Burma (see fig. 3). In charge of each was a commissioner, responsible to the governor (in 1967 responsible to the Minister for Home Affairs). The seven Divisions, in turn, were divided into Districts, each under a deputy commissioner (or District officer) who was actually the focal point of governmental authority at the local level. His authority was derived not from the people but from the central government. He was assisted in his multiple duties by subdivisional officers and township officers, who wielded the same diversified and absolute powers in their duties. The governmental representatives on the local level were the *thugyis*, or village headmen.

This structure of local administration, including the position of deputy commissioner (District officer) who before the war was the key administrative official at the local level, remained in effect throughout most of Burma in the mid-1960's. However, the functions and responsibilities of individuals within the structure have changed considerably. Increased centralization of government has placed the entire control of such matters as education in the hands of the Ministry of Education. Municipalities and villages similarly have been relieved of responsibility for such matters as vaccination and the upkeep of roads.

Centralization of administrative functions has been accompanied by a corresponding decrease in responsibilities assigned the District officers. The various ministries have their own offices throughout the countryside, and the District officers not only have to cope with many new officials and programs but are subject to the overall control of the local Security and Administrative Committee.

THE CIVIL SERVICE

Approximately 90,000 civil servants manned the government's administrative machinery during the mid-1960's. In addition, the government employed several hundred thousand workers in vari-

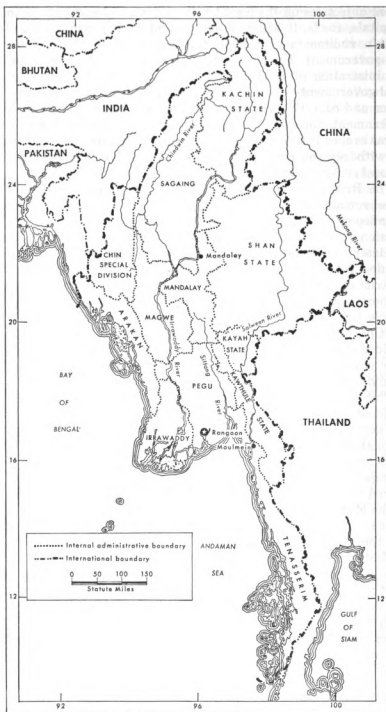


Figure 3. Political Administrative Divisions in Burma.

ous state enterprises. The Civil Service proper offered more favorable conditions of employment than the government business enterprises and conferred a prestige on the officeholder not enjoyed by other government workers. In keeping with traditions developed in colonial days the top echelon of the Civil Service in particular represented a high level of intelligence, honesty and devotion to duty and had much to do with maintaining the stability within the country during the disorders of the postindependence period.

In accordance with a constitutional proviso a Public Services Commission was set up after independence to examine and select candidates for appointment to the various grades of the Civil Service and to advise on disciplinary matters. At that time the ranks of the Civil Service, reflecting the system developed by the British, comprised Senior and Junior Branches with differing conditions of employment, and a further distinction was made between permanent gazetted members and temporary civil servants.

During the 1950's the government conducted several studies aimed at determining steps that might be taken to improve the Civil Service. The discharge, after independence, of civil servants who were not citizens of Burma had cost the administrative services many of its well-qualified personnel, and new recruitment had failed fully to replace the loss. There was also a morale problem stemming from insecurity, lack of an attractive training and advancement system and what was considered undue political interference in administrative matters.

In 1961 a Public Services Enquiry Commission, headed by the Chief Justice of Burma, surveyed the Civil Service and recommended a number of changes in the system, including increased salaries, guaranteed tenure and measures to improve efficiency and prevent overstaffing. The U Nu government raised the retirement age from 55 to 58 years, but further action on the recommendations of the Commission was suspended by the Ne Win coup of 1962 and not resumed until 1963. In that year the government acted to abolish the Senior and Junior service categories and the distinctions between permanent and temporary employees. Standardized employment conditions were established with a uniform system of advancement, leaves of absence and pensions.

Civil Service pay scales in effect during the mid-1960's had not been revised since they were established at the time of independence in 1948. At that time salaries were reduced to roughly half the rate under the British. Considering the austerity required and practiced by the military officers assigned to civil administration by the Ne Win government, there is a question as to what further steps would be taken to implement the Public Services Enquiry Commission Report of 1961.

CHAPTER 14

POLITICAL DYNAMICS

Civilian political leaders and officers of the armed forces have alternately held political power in independent Burma. Civilians governed from 1948 until 1962 with the exception of a 16-month period from 1958 until 1960 when General Ne Win formed a Caretaker Government at their request. From 1962 until mid-1967 the military ruled without regard to the Constitution and declared political parties, other than the one that they themselves sponsored, illegal.

Force has, on a few critical occasions, proven to be the final political arbiter in Burma. In 1936 a student strike galvanized the nationalist movement and created the leaders of independent Burma. In 1947, Aung San, national hero and leader of the emerging new government, was murdered just before independence, and in 1962 the armed force determined a change in government. Armed resistance against the government, whether for ethnic or ideological reasons, has been a technique consistently in use from 1943 until mid-1967.

Nevertheless, certain Western democratic practices came to be accepted by the politically aware after independence. The legislature was accepted until 1962 as the institutional symbol of democracy and in it issues were debated. An orderly transfer of power was accomplished in 1956 when the Deputy Prime Minister ruled for one year, and in 1958 and 1960 the armed forces peacefully and legally assumed and relinquished control of the government. Freedom of speech was allowed, and its excesses, which often led to official hatreds, seldom prejudiced social amenities.

To the majority of the people political participation is an alien concept. Under the king they were subjects, and they remained so under the British. Organizations connecting the lower ranks of society with the national government still did not exist as effective forces in 1967. The subject, or citizen, has been and is primarily concerned with basic local matters, such as the price of rice, the availability of consumer goods and ceremonies at the local pagoda.

In the twentieth century, however, a number of distinctive groupings of political participants took form. Descendants of families that had served in the king's court became appointed civil servants under the British. They formed a special Burmese

class of administrators owing allegiance to the British colonial system of government. Monks and students, more closely identified with the general population, gained their experience in the nationalist movement. These individuals, particularly the student nationalists who were to become the political and military leaders, have become the principal political actors in independent Burma.

ADMINISTRATORS AND THE POLITICAL LEADERS

Administrators in colonial Burma's civil service were a class apart. They represented the Burmese elite, gained their position by appointment, were often Western educated, had considerable power in their districts and were the most prominent individuals, socially and economically, in their society. Although they accepted many of the practices and forms of the British they were never accepted by them as social equals. Their goals were to attain positions of comfort, respectability and authority within the colonial framework of government.

The political leaders who emerged were more closely identified with the people and owed their position to popular support. The most important of them attended Rangoon University in the 1930's, participated in student-nationalist activities, were brought into the Japanese-dominated government, helped throw out the Japanese and then negotiated successfully for independence from Great Britain. Most of them participated in the governing of Burma as members of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL).

After independence was achieved, the administrator or civil servant class resented being superseded in social position and power by the new class of popularly elected political leaders. Trained to carry out orders rather than make decisions, they did not provide the support necessary to carry out the new government's policies effectively. They withdrew rather than accept responsibility, partly because of their distrust of the political leaders and partly because of their reduced social status, which made them question their earlier acceptance of British ways.

The political leaders, in turn, failed to respect or place trust in their countrymen who had accepted British colonial standards without questioning them. Yet, they needed the assistance of the civil servants whose skills had been learned from the British. The failure of the democratic process and the 1962 army coup can be largely attributed to the lack of cooperation between the political leaders and the civilian administrators.

Until 1962 those who made a career of politics exercised their constitutional rights in a multiparty political system dominated by a single party, the AFPFL (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). The

AFPFL, originally a coalition of Socialists, Communists and trade unionists, was created in 1944 as a resistance movement against the Japanese. The defeat of the Japanese and the return of the British reoriented party objectives toward independence, which was achieved through the efforts of its leadership.

The AFPFL governed Burma until 1958 when Prime Minister U Nu asked the Army to form a caretaker government and make preparations for national elections. In that year the AFPFL split into two factions, one led by U Nu and the other led by the Socialists Ba Swe and Kyaw Nyein. Swe and Nyein had been deputy prime ministers and had consulted U Nu on major policy decisions. The split, caused by personal differences, had led to outbreaks of violence which jeopardized the holding of fair elections.

The two factions contested the 1960 elections as U Nu's Union or Clean Party and the Swe-Nyein AFPFL or Stable Party. The Union Party's decisive victory was attributed to U Nu's personal popularity and identification with Buddhism, his promise of the right of separation to minority groups and the association of the opposition Stable faction with the Caretaker Government which had become distasteful to much of the populace.

The AFPFL and its Clean and Stable Parties had a strong socialist orientation. Ideology and party program were not the determining elements in its success, however, which can be more directly attributed to its role as the embodiment of the nationalist aspirations of the Burmese. Its leaders, also, were successful more as a result of personal appeal and association with the independence movement than to their capacity to plan, organize and implement a political program.

The National United Front provided the AFPFL with its only real legal opposition. In 1956 it won 44 of the 250 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, a sufficient number to influence the intra-party AFPFL fight in 1958. The end result of the dissension, however, only demonstrated that personal interests and opportunism, not belief, were determining factors in the political infighting.

The National United Front in 1956 was a coalition of 19 parties advocating Marxist ideas and opposition to the AFPFL. Failure to unite and develop a distinctive program prevented its opposition from becoming effective. Its most important element was the Burma Workers and Peasants Party, a Socialist group consisting primarily of Rangoon lawyers and left-wing intellectuals.

The failure of parliamentary democracy can be attributed largely to the lack of sound political organization, particularly within the AFPFL which had the resources of a party holding office for 10 years. Political leaders and administrators often

failed to cooperate in carrying out the normal functions of government. Party leadership was racked by personal differences that prevented the formation of an effective system of communication within its own ranks, and many of their members were overly concerned with status and position.

General Ne Win's military coup eclipsed the role of the elected political leader as a public figure. Many political leaders jailed in 1962 were still detained in 1967, although U Nu and Ba Swe obtained their unconditional release in 1966. The poor record and unfavorable image of those who made a career of politics had made them unpopular with the populace. The civil servants welcomed army rule if for nothing more than to have the political leaders removed from their positions of power.

THE ARMED SERVICES

The armed services form an intensely nationalist, predominantly Burman organization which was born in the nationalist movement of the 1930's. They are largely the creation of General Ne Win, who has selected its leaders, supervised its training and led it after the death of Aung San in 1947. Under Ne Win they were the backbone of parliamentary democracy until 1962. Without their support the popular U Nu and his AFPFL colleagues could not have maintained constitutional government.

In 1949, with Rangoon in danger from Communist and insurrectionary forces, Ne Win was appointed deputy prime minister. During the following critical period of 1½ years the armed forces averted the threat and restored political stability. Ne Win then resigned. In 1958, when it appeared that violence was going to disrupt forthcoming elections, Ne Win and the armed forces interceded and conducted fair and free elections. Once again he resigned in favor of the constitutionally elected authorities. After 14 years of experience Ne Win declared parliamentary democracy unworkable under the conditions then existing in the country.

The background of the military officers is similar to that of the political leaders, although they often reflect a more agrarian, Buddhist, non-Western outlook. Officers of the armed forces became a nonrepresentative group of society; they represent a reasonably efficient, hard-working and dedicated group of men. Burmese society, on the other hand, has been described as lacking decisiveness and the type of motivation needed for modernization, characteristics also noted in the political parties.

The differences may be traced to the experiences of the two groups. The political leaders in power failed to take decisive actions in order not to alienate any group, and they used patronage and favors to solidify their positions. The military, faced with

fighting the Japanese and then the insurrectionists, could enjoy no such luxury. The school of experience, competition and war led to the rise of a group of competent, action-oriented men.

In 1958 Ne Win and U Nu decided that the forthcoming elections would only be fair and free if administered by the armed forces. They agreed that General Ne Win, the commander, should form a caretaker government, and U Nu took action to legalize his assumption of power.

The 23 officers who had primary responsibilities in the new government believed that they had as great an insight into political life as the individuals who followed politics as a career. Many had done so themselves until assigned to military service in order to staff a government institution. Of the five colonels in the innermost circle, two were related by marriage to important civilian political figures, and one had been a former Cabinet minister. They believed that their military experience had given them qualities of decisiveness and command which had been notably lacking among the civilians in government.

The armed forces, ruling through legally constituted channels, set up a pattern of rule similar to the prewar colonial government. Political strife was curtailed and administrative decision emphasized. The people were to be taught and led. In 17 months of this sort of rule the economy reached the greatest production level in history. Rebel activities, which had increased because of the political instability caused by the AFPFL split, were sharply curtailed.

In 1960 the Ne Win government permitted elections which returned the country to civilian rule. This step had earlier been agreed upon, but other factors were involved. Ranking military officers found they were becoming like the civilians they had replaced. They wanted to maintain their integrity and demonstrate their successes before becoming subject to the disaffection they could foresee. The Burmese were becoming hostile to the rigid standards they had enforced, and many problems were proving difficult to overcome. In essence the military often seemed as disturbed about modernization as the civilians.

BUDDHISTS AND STUDENTS

The *sangha* (Buddhist monkhood) is the most powerful interest group in the country. There is a monastery in virtually every village, and in the cities *kyaungtaiks* (clusters of monasteries) housed up to 1,500 monks who constitute powerful political action groups. *Sangha* power is weakened by the lack of coordination between monasteries (see ch. 11, Religion).

The political role of the *pongyi* (ordained monks), has been primarily played in an urban setting. They have formed pressure groups when they feel their interests are threatened, supported politicians during elections and have been a useful tool of the government in opposing communism.

Resolutions, demonstrations, posters and coercion were the techniques employed by the *pongyi* to influence the U Nu government. Resolutions, passed in closed session, were presented to the government as a pressure group tactic. The *pongyi* have stopped legislators and made them sign statements indicating how they would vote on proposed issues; weapons have been found in monasteries indicating support of insurrectionary forces.

In the twentieth century the *pongyi* have organized to influence a variety of issues and have supported political parties. They supported the nationalist movement and since independence have denounced and opposed communism. *Pongyi* in the states dominated by minority groups have usually supported their ethnic kin.

In 1938 the Yahanpyu Aphwe (All Burma Young Monks Association) was founded to oppose Indian Moslems. In 1967 it was opposed to communism. The Association was often consulted by the AFPFL, particularly the Socialist faction which it supported in the 1960 elections. The members are militant Buddhist nationalists who are well organized and led. In 1963 their general secretary reported a membership of 21,000.

The Presiding Monks Association, a separate group primarily concerned with monastic order and reform, supported U Nu in the 1960 elections. A third group, Yahan Nge Aphwe (Young Monks Association), has a strong leftist orientation, supported the National United Front and occasionally has come into violent conflict with the All Burma Young Monks Association.

The majority of the students are primarily concerned with gaining a degree and the economic and social opportunities it offers. Student leaders, on the other hand, are restless, oriented towards extremist ideologies and given to the use of violence. They are in the vanguard of social change because they are alienated from the past, disillusioned with the present and often idealistic about the future. The students are conditioned by the history of their nationalist predecessors and a social environment which awards them status, freedom and respect.

Before 1962 the Rangoon University Student Union dominated university political life. Its power was augmented by a compulsory contribution required of all students. In 1958 General Ne Win stopped this contribution, but student political parties continued to function. Leftists, under a variety of names, have dominated

student politics since 1953, so much so that the career-oriented student has made the ethnic, social and religious clubs the focus of student life.

Only 2 percent of the university students are members of student political organizations, but this group is able to mobilize the majority of the student population on issues which directly relate to them, particularly if the government uses force to deter their demonstrations. In Mandalay in 1964 there was a mass march and riots to protest a new examination system. Examinations had to be given under police protection. In 1962 a small student protest against regulations limiting their activities was repressed by the police. The result was a mass demonstration which was put down by the shooting of 15 students and the siege of the University by visits of the army. On the other hand, the political issues of state autonomy and the status of Buddhism have produced no strong student action.

The position of the student vis-a-vis the armed forces is important but difficult to determine. The students, trained for a modern society but living in an agrarian one, are the most politicized group in the country. Many former students are unemployed, and many would-be students cannot find classroom space. Dissension exists between students and the military, but students realize that the best career openings are in the armed forces. Restrictions on freedom of expression obscure the nature and extent of the dissension.

ETHNIC MINORITIES

Since independence various groups, usually members of ethnic minorities, have periodically rebelled against the central government. Armed opposition by the ethnic minorities has not always been to gain independence but has been primarily centered on questions of autonomy within the Union of Burma.

In mid-1967 the Kachins, Shans, Chins, Arakanese, Mons and Karens all had insurrectionary forces in operation. The Shans, although divided into at least two organizations, had the largest force, estimated at a few thousand men. The Shans are property-owning villagers who dislike the socialization of Burma by General Ne Win, whom they consider a Communist. They feel they have to fight for their constitutional rights which give them some autonomy but which have been abrogated by the Ne Win regime which seeks to build a unitary state. In 1965 they looked forward to causing enough trouble to bring back U Nu, with whom they felt they could negotiate. Their resistance has grown commensurate with the efforts made by the government to subdue them.

The Karens have a number of organizations, the most important of which, in mid-1967, seemed to be the Council on National Liberation and the Karen National Defense Organization. The Council on National Liberation reported only 300 men under arms but asserted that they would have 10 times that number if they had the arms. The significance of the movement is that it has accepted dissident Burmese, Mons and Chins into the organization and has offered to cooperate with the Shans if they can heal their differences.

Among the Karens they are many Christian leaders and also a number of former army officers who defected or were expelled from the Army of Burma when the Karen National Defense Organization was formed in 1949 to oppose the central government. At that time about half the officers in the Army of Burma were Karens. Karen opposition is usually in a state of flux; numbers of different groups are formed and then die, but they have always had a propensity to negotiate with the government. The Karen National Defense Organization, after reaching an accord with General Ne Win in 1963, had reportedly resumed action against the government in mid-1967.

COMMUNISTS

Communist rebels seek to overthrow the government. The underground Communists, split into two groups, both led by former AFPFL members, have negotiated with the government but evidently with no intentions of coming to terms with them. For all practical purposes they operate outside of the legal political process.

The Red Flag Communists, with approximately 600 members, exist in Arakan and the delta region and represent no threat to the government. The White Flag Communists, estimated to have 3,000 members, have ties with Communist China, a fact which increases their potential for troublemaking.

The Burma Workers and Peasants Party, receiving Communist support, and legal until 1964, suffered drastically when approximately 500 of its leaders were imprisoned in 1963 in a general roundup of Communist and Communist affiliated political leaders.

THE PEASANT AND POLITICS

The peasants have traditionally looked upon the government as an alien force, one of the five basic evils to be feared by man. Before independence there was no tradition of political organization in the village, but since then leaders have arisen who have had some, if little, connection with the central government.

Villages are usually led by hereditary headman. However, another man may have more wealth, power or a combination of power and virtue known as *pon*. Whoever has *pon* is the person whom political leaders seek in order to gain support. Studies of two villages near Mandalay concluded that the presence or absence of a man with *pon* seemed to determine the local political activity (see ch. 17, Political Values and Attitudes).

In one village a Union Party member approached the man with *pon*, not the headman, asking for support. The man agreed to become a party member, and 39 villagers followed his example. A check showed that all 39 were either related to this man or had close business connections with him. No other person in the village of 550 belonged to a party. The presence of this man with *pon* obviated political strife and brought favors to the village.

In the other village there was no man with *pon*, and political competition was evident among various individuals who were striving for this status. There were only 15 party members in this village of approximately 400 persons. Membership was spread among a number of parties, indicating that a few individuals were willing to contest for *pon* and political favor but that the majority avoided political participation. It seems that the peasant must see a relationship between party membership and personal gain for him to become politically active.

The widespread stimulation of peasant political activity, never achieved by the politician, has become one of the primary goals of the army government. The needs of the peasants are few and can be met largely through their own efforts. This tends to insulate them from the government. It also means that only extreme actions taken by the government are likely to arouse their opposition.

GOVERNMENT BY THE MILITARY, 1962-67

In February 1962 the armed forces under General Ne Win executed a bloodless coup. From then until mid-1967 they kept all political power within their own ranks. The goal of the Ne Win government in 1967 was to spread and increase the power of the state. Although it clearly showed that it would brook no opposition, its main goal was to strengthen the country politically and economically and to prepare the people for political participation.

General Ne Win formed a Revolutionary Council as the supreme organ of government. In 1967 its members were all military officers loyal to him, and he in turn gave them his full support. The Council members have been described as managerial types whose strength lies in their mutual loyalty, discipline and sense of mission. Their only open dispute was resolved by the retirement of Brigadier Aung Gyi in 1963.

Aung Gyi and Ne Win were nationalistic colleagues who had agitated against the British. Aung Gyi later became a leading Socialist politician strongly committed to his ideology. He had proven himself as a capable administrator and officer and had been chosen to fill in for Ne Win whenever the latter was absent. He was characterized as the most open, liberal and flexible member of the Council and enjoyed popular support.

The dispute leading to Aung Gyi's dismissal centered on his advocating a middle way to socialism which would permit some private enterprise and the participation of political parties. Colonel Tin Pe led the group which emphasized a less flexible approach and more central control by government. The conflict was resolved when Aung Gyi announced his retirement and moved to a remote village in Kachin State.

This dispute reflects a hardening of attitude on the part of the military leaders. In 1958 Ne Win's first, or caretaker government, advocated freedom, democracy and socialism, in that order. After its 1962 assumption of power, the second Ne Win government declared that parliamentary democracy had proven unsuccessful and that socialism was to be stressed. Popular political activity was suppressed or carefully controlled, and private business enterprises were nationalized. By early 1963 the statist approach, advocated by Tin Pe, appeared to have the full acceptance of the Revolutionary Council.

The evolution toward a more rigid statist approach led the government to create a political party that would provide popular support for its programs, and the Burmese Socialist Program Party was formed in 1962 to train cadres who would serve as the vanguard of a mass party. In 1964 all political parties other than the Burmese Socialist Program Party were declared illegal. Five years after its establishment, the Burmese Socialist Program Party reportedly claimed only 20 full-fledged members. There were 200,000 candidates for membership who had to go through a 2-year indoctrination period before becoming members. The organizing staff were sensitive to any threats from Burmese Communists whom they had fought for years. Thus, although based on the Communist idea of a party serving as a counterpart to government, the Burma Socialist Program Party was a nationalist party owing allegiance to its creator, the Revolutionary Council.

In addition to establishing the nucleus of a mass political party, the Ne Win government planned to develop political awareness among the people at large by an educational program, the conduct of annual Peasant Seminars and the formation of Workers and Peasants Councils. In 1967 the first Workers' Councils were organized, but the Peasants Councils had not yet come into being (see

ch. 13, The Governmental System; ch. 21, Labor Relations and Organization).

By whatever means promoted, it seemed clear in 1967 that political participation by the public at large would be closely guided along lines determined by the Revolutionary Council. Since 1963 students have limited their protests to campus matters. The political involvement of the *pongyi* was challenged by the arrest of 92 monks in 1965, and no significant monastic organization has supported the Revolutionary Council whose policies limiting private enterprise indirectly cut off an important source of their funds normally received in the form of donations from Buddhist businessmen.

The ethnic minorities continued to be a problem in 1967. The goal of maximizing and aggregating state power means creation of a unitary state. The ethnic minorities fear that their interests would thus be subordinated to the Burmans and, consequently, have intensified their opposition to the central government. General Ne Win offered amnesty to the rebel organizations in 1963 and held peace parleys with their leaders but met with little success. The government continued to make positive efforts to encourage national integration by sponsoring studies of minority cultures and languages but refused to compromise with any group which did not want to give its full allegiance to the Union of Burma.

The norms of political life in mid-1967 were those created by the Revolutionary Council. Political opposition was not tolerated, and parliamentary democracy in the Western tradition was at least held in abeyance. A vanguard political party had been created to lead the people into political life within the framework of an evolving socialist state. The state was to be the main provider of the needs of its citizens.

The strength of the Revolutionary Council lay in its unity and sense of purpose. Its primary weakness was its fear of opposition and criticism. Political communication between the leaders and the people is thus virtually precluded. This condition, in a country where the populace is given to outbursts of violence, must be noted as well as the political stability which existed in mid-1967. As of that date the Revolutionary Council was firmly in command.

CHAPTER 15

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Independence and entry into the twentieth century interstate system came at a time when the Cold War was most intense. Burma's leaders, inspired by both British ideals and Marxist principles and seeking friendly relations with all nations, had no desire to be drawn into the conflict between the Communist and non-Communist worlds. The problem was to avoid conflict while securing the assistance needed to maintain independence and national unity. A policy of nonalignment was adopted, and nonalignment continued to be the dominant theme of foreign policy.

The country's initial search for allies was met by indifference, and early experiences in international diplomacy made its leaders recognize that Cold War priorities dominated the foreign policies of the major powers, leaving Burma in an isolated and vulnerable position.

The mid-1950's witnessed a slight easing of tensions between Cold War antagonists which served to strengthen the country's position. A Sino-Soviet strategy of more active relations with Asian nations emerged. The signing in 1954 of the "Five Principles of Coexistence" agreement with Communist China and India stabilized and permitted increased interaction with the former and confirmed attitudes of cooperation with the latter. Newly independent Asian and African countries meeting at Bandung in 1955 served notice of their intention to play a more important role in world politics in the future.

Increased international intercourse has not meant any wavering from the policy of nonalignment. Burma has managed to accept aid from nations of all ideological colors without committing itself to any bloc, alignment or nation. Success has strengthened conviction; change in government has not meant change in foreign policy.

DETERMINANTS OF POLICY

The government in power in 1967 was attempting to build a modern state in a deeply divided, tradition-oriented and under-developed country. The avoidance of war is essential to the achievement of this aim. The goals of the Ne Win government,

then, are to revolutionize Burmese society, unify the country and avoid conflict with other nations.

The Constitution reflects Burma's desire for peace. Chapter XII, devoted to international relations, renounces war as an instrument of national policy, accepts the principles of international law and affirms devotion to the ideal of peace and friendly cooperation amongst nations (see ch. 13, The Governmental System). These ideas represent the basic principles of a policy that the Burmese term "nonalignment."

U Nu, who for 15 years largely determined Burma's foreign policy, has defined nonalignment as an impartial examination of every foreign-policy issue on its merits; friendly relations with all nations possible; acceptance of aid in the creation of a welfare state in Burma, provided the aid is freely given and will not detract from Burma's sovereignty; and a willingness to contribute to building world peace and to assist any nation that might need help. In practice, this policy has meant nonparticipation in any power bloc, with a concurrent attempt to promote friendly relations among all nations. These attitudes are still adhered to by a government which overthrew U Nu in 1962. Nonalignment is strictly adhered to.

Laws enacted and policies followed by the Ne Win government have been directed at eliminating foreign influence. All business enterprises of any importance, many foreign owned, have been nationalized, and foreign nationals not electing to apply for Burmese citizenship have been repatriated. Foreign aid programs have been reduced, and foreign credits have often gone unused. Most foreigners, except those on official visits, were being permitted to enter the country only on 24-hour visas early in 1967.

Since independence the foreign policy of the government has never been seriously questioned by the people nor has parliamentary debate ever led to policy change. With each new government the continued pursuit of a policy of nonalignment has been both assumed and accepted. The majority of the people are unconcerned with foreign affairs, and those ethnic minorities that are organized concentrate on their own domestic objectives.

The making of foreign policy has always been handled by the prime minister or, in the case of the government in power in 1967, the chairman of the Revolutionary Council. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the formal responsibility, but important matters such as the border agreement with China have been personally handled at the highest level of government. Great care has been taken in selecting officials to conduct foreign affairs. In 1967 the foreign minister was the only civilian holding a Cabinet-level post in a government predominantly military. Ambassadors

to the major powers have been selected, and U Thant, who formerly represented Burma in the United Nations, became the secretary general of that organization.

The alternatives available to Burma's policymakers have appeared limited. Internal commitments and conditions preclude an activist foreign policy. The proximity of China and the armed conflict in Southeast Asia, exacerbated by the nationalism endemic to the region, threaten Burma. Close association with any power conceivably could draw the country into a conflict over which it has no control or vital interest. Nonalignment has consistently been viewed as the least threatening policy choice.

The means of implementing policy are also limited. The government's resources are channeled toward combatting internal division and developing the socialist state. Eighty percent of the armed forces were engaged in pacification and maintenance of internal security during the mid-1960's. Burma does not represent a military, economic or psychological threat to any other nation.

Lacking the capabilities and resources to pursue an activist foreign policy and wishing primarily to be left alone, Burma has depended upon the written and spoken word as a substitute for power in dealing with other nations. Adhering to agreed principles of international law, signing treaties of friendship and following a nonprovocative policy of nonalignment are relied on in place of military and economic power in pursuing a course designed to keep the country out of ideological and national conflicts which might threaten its existence.

The Search for Policy: 1948-54

The country's initial and formative experiences in foreign relations were both unhappy and disappointing. Failure to obtain military assistance from the West and delayed recognition by the Communist countries, compounded by disillusionment with the United Nations, were to strengthen the country's leaders' commitment to a policy of nonalignment.

When Burma joined the United Nations, Prime Minister U Nu stated:

We were not prompted by considerations of . . . aid, education missions . . . and such other benefits likely to accrue from our membership. These things, however desirable, are immaterial. What was foremost in our minds was the expectation of United Nations assistance if our country should be subjected to aggression by a stronger power.

Whatever doubts the government may have had on this issue were largely dispelled by the decision of the Security Council to inter-

vene in Korea. Burma strongly supported this decision, and U Nu vigorously defended it in a speech to Parliament.

The government quickly became disenchanted with the United Nations as it witnessed the unwillingness to compromise and the Cold War atmosphere which dominated debate as the Korean situation developed. Thereafter, the inability of the United Nations to achieve a definitive agreed solution in the Korean conflict caused Burma's support of the United Nations action in the Korean war and its faith in the United Nations to wane.

Despite this experience, the country felt obliged not long after to turn to the United Nations for assistance in resolving a serious problem that had developed within its own boundaries. When the Nationalist Chinese Government was driven from the mainland to Taiwan, some of its forces in Yunnan retreated into Burma, establishing bases of operations. Raids into China were unsuccessful but provocative. By 1953 the Nationalist Chinese forces had grown in strength to 12,000. Sometimes joining with local opposition groups, these troops intensified Burma's civil insurrection problem, and as self-styled representatives of the Chinese Nationalist Government they provided an excellent excuse for a Communist invasion of Burmese territory.

The government, fearful of another Korean-type situation, hesitated to call on the United Nations. It also rejected Communist China's offers to help eject the Nationalist Chinese troops for fear of intervention, but the real and potential threat imposed by the presence of Nationalist Chinese forces called for a solution which Burma was insufficiently equipped to impose alone.

In March 1953 the government of Burma filed a complaint of aggression against Nationalist China. A General Assembly resolution was passed, urging evacuation of foreign forces, but the Burmese were unsuccessful in having the Nationalist Chinese Government named as the aggressor. The resolution was implemented by a United States offer to act as mediator. A commission composed of representatives from the United States, Nationalist China, Thailand and Burma met in Bangkok and soon reached an agreement calling for evacuation of the Kuomintang forces.

Although the agreement was not fully carried out, and Nationalist Chinese remnants were an active force which caused friction as late as 1967, this affair altered the government of Burma's attitudes, particularly with respect to Communist China and the United States. At the outset, Burma was primarily concerned with the reaction of Communist China, but the latter was sympathetic throughout this whole period, during which it could have put a great deal of pressure on Burma. Communist China also ceased opposition to the Burmese Government. Burma, in turn,

was careful to keep the Peiping government fully informed on all negotiations that took place.

Concurrently, United States-Burmese relations reached a low point. Before going to the United Nations, Burma terminated all United States assistance programs, asserting that it was immoral to receive aid from a nation that was assisting the Nationalist Chinese. The Burmese felt that United States pressure on the Chinese Nationalist Government could have resolved the issue.

An arms-seeking mission to the United States and the United Kingdom in 1949 during the height of civil insurrection was not successful. Burma's diplomatic recognition of Communist China met disapproval in the West, and the Burmese found the United Nations wanting as a resolver of conflict, but the death of Stalin, a reorientation of policy in Communist China and the newly felt strength of the independent Asian nations provided new opportunities.

In 1953-54 Sino-Soviet strategy in Asia became a policy of promoting or intensifying Asian neutralism and nonalignment. The new approach was furthered by what became widely known as the "Five Principles of Coexistence." First enunciated by Prime Minister Nehru of India, they were inserted in the preamble to the Sino-Indian agreement regarding Tibet in 1954 and were hence subscribed to by the Communist Chinese. Later, the Soviet Union indicated its adherence, as did nearly every nation of South and Southeast Asia. The "Five Principles" called for—mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; mutual nonaggression; mutual noninterference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; and peaceful coexistence. These principles furnished basic guidance for a foreign policy which was becoming known as positive neutrality.

By the mid-1950's Burma had begun to play an increasingly important role as a neutralist leader. It was host to the first Asian Socialist Conference in 1953, and the following year U Nu, the prime minister, met with the prime ministers of India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Malaya to discuss Asian problems. This grouping, referred to as the Colombo Powers, inspired the Bandung Conference of 1955, the first intergovernmental attempt to find common ground among the Asian and African nations.

Bandung came when Burma had completed 6 years of independence. During this time its foreign policy had been conducted on an ad hoc basis while the country's rulers attempted to maintain national unity and independence. The government had turned to a number of nations for help and found them wanting. No longer would any type of special assistance be expected from any nation. Nevertheless, Communist China, reorganizing after a half-

century of civil war, was to receive special consideration as a threat too great to ignore.

RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST CHINA

Communist Chinese-Burmese relations are of the highest importance because Burma's two paramount problems of national unity and independence depend to a great extent upon this relationship. The overpopulated Chinese mainland shares a 1,358-mile border with underpopulated Burma. Communist China suffers annual food deficits, and Burma is one of the world's leading exporters of rice. Communist China's aggressive revolutionary leadership constitutes an omnipresent threat that it might direct its attention towards the Burmese Government. Nevertheless, up to 1967 the two had managed to contain their differences.

The Burma-Communist China border presented Rangoon with its most touchy issue and greatest success in external relations. Historically, Chinese governments, including those of the twentieth-century leaders, Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Tse-tung, have all laid claims to large parts of Burmese territory.

Neither Communist China nor Burma expressed much interest in the northern Wa provinces until 1956 when Rangoon newspapers reported large units of Chinese Communists in Burma. The government admitted their presence but said the reports were greatly exaggerated. Four years of intermittent negotiations resulted in the 1960 ratification of a treaty transferring two small tracts of disputed territory to China, giving Burma permanent rights to a strategic tract "leased" from China by the British, delimiting the frontier and creating a joint committee to survey and demarcate the boundary. Chou En-lai and a 400-man delegation visited Rangoon for the exchange of ratifications.

Despite their proximity, economic intercourse between the two nations has been limited. Coming after Burma decided on a neutralist foreign policy, Communist China's aid and trade policies vis-a-vis Burma seem to have followed rather than led the way. Major agreements signed in 1954 and 1961 provided for Chinese goods and services to be sent to Burma on an interest-free credit basis, the sale of Burmese rice to Communist China and the establishment of more communications facilities. Through 1965 only the equivalent of \$18 million of \$84 million worth of sterling credits made available to Burma had been utilized, indicating Burmese caution about becoming too closely tied to Communist China's economy (see ch. 23, Foreign Economic Relations).

The government which took over in 1962 has dedicated itself to eliminating foreign influence in the country. All foreign propaganda activities were stopped, including those of the New China

News Agency, whose headquarters were raided. Thousands of propaganda leaflets were found and destroyed. Promulgation of the Enterprise Nationalization Law in 1963 brought under government control the two banks owned by Communist China and operating in Rangoon, and Chinese schools, which earlier had been forced to follow a Burmese curriculum, were taken over by the state. Up to this time the government of Communist China had been able to exert pressure on Overseas Chinese in Burma who wanted loans from the banks.

In 1962 the Burmese Communist Party indicated its support of Communist China in the Sino-Soviet dispute and established close relations with the government there. Trouble flared when the official *People's Daily*, in congratulating the Burmese Communist Party on its anniversary, described the Burmese Government as imperialist and revisionist, adding that the Communist Party would strive for the establishment of a new Burma of real independence, politically and economically. The government of Burma was affronted but took no official notice, although a government-controlled newspaper suggested that the affair could bring about a termination of relations between the two countries.

Until June 1967 this was the only noted aberration in what was a remarkably circumspect relationship. Communist China seemed to use Burma as a model to demonstrate to other countries that it could pursue a proper and peaceful relationship with its neighbors. The government of Burma, for its part, welcomed this lack of interference from a neighboring nation which represented a potential threat to its existence.

RELATIONS WITH INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Relations with India have been marked by ambivalence. In the early years of independence the mutual respect felt between Prime Ministers U Nu and Nehru stood in contrast to the feeling of animosity the average Burmese felt towards the Indians who, during the period of British colonial rule, held most of the positions of political and economic importance.

Indian-Burmese cooperation in the 1950's was not limited to the personal affinity of the two prime ministers. India supported Burma's bid for admission to the United Nations, wrote off 70 percent of Burma's prepartition debt, purchased Burma's rice surpluses and approved the diversion to Burma of British arms shipments during the most critical period of insurrection. In 1951 the two signed a treaty of friendship.

Relations during the early and mid-1960's have remained formally friendly, although the death of Nehru and the accession to power in Burma of Ne Win's nationalistic group of leaders led

to domestic policies in Burma which exacerbated the normal antipathy of the Burmans toward people from India. Passage of the Enterprise Nationalization Law, though not directed against any national group, has hit the Indian community the hardest.

Indians have dominated the twentieth-century economic life of Burma. They were successful in business and agriculture; together with the Chinese they were granted over 80 percent of the export licenses issued by the government and were accused of charging usurious rates on loans to Burmese. The Enterprise Nationalization Law put them out of business. A lack of affinity for the Burmese and a lack of interest in Burma, other than economic, put them out of the country.

Within 30 months after passage of the law some 90 percent of the Indian nationals registered in Burma as foreigners were repatriated. They were given nothing for their property, forbidden to take even personal articles out of the country and limited to carrying only small sums of currency. Despite this, the Indian foreign minister stated that Indian policy was not to criticize a friendly country. Internal instability dictates that neither nation unduly provoke the other.

In 1952, Pakistan and Burma signed a treaty of friendship which formalized relations that have never been other than amicable. Their 45-mile border, corresponding to the evershifting channel of the Naf River, provided a minor point of contention that was resolved in a 1966 protocol setting a fixed boundary. The repatriation, because of the Enterprise Nationalization Law, of nearly half of the Pakistanis registered in Burma caused no ill will, and recent talks between the chiefs of state have been devoted to methods of improving communications and increasing trade between the two countries.

RELATIONS WITH COUNTRIES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

In 1967, Thailand and Burma were making every effort to maintain proper and friendly relations despite a history of friction between the two countries. Thai-Burmese wars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries still produce a high emotional reaction among the people of both countries.

In 1953 Thailand refused to admit Burmese observers at staging points used for the evacuation of Nationalist Chinese troops. Burma, dissatisfied with the results of the evacuation, resumed action against the Nationalist Chinese and in the process accidentally bombed a Thai village. The Thai premier accused Burma of "general unfriendliness." Burma apologized and offered K20,000 (K4.76 equal US\$1) compensation. Thailand returned the money to Prime Minister U Nu, who, in turn, gave the check to his am-

bassador to Thailand to be used for the purpose of performing works of merit in Thailand. This remarkable exchange was followed by a Burmese-Thai communique waiving all World War II claims held by Burma against Thailand. In 1956 a treaty of friendship was signed.

In recent years Burma's ethnic minorities, particularly the Shans, have presented the government with a serious challenge. Shan State borders Thailand, its people speak a Thai language and they regard themselves as being related to the Thais. Since 1962 the Shan State insurrectionists have waged war against the government of Burma, maintaining representatives in Thailand where they command some sympathy. This touchy situation has received the cooperation and attention of the Thai Government in a joint attempt to control subversive activity in the border regions. However, lack of control by both governments in these areas had not eliminated the activity of the Shans by 1967. The problem was being closely watched because each government wanted to avoid incurring the enmity of a neighbor sharing a 1,000-mile border.

Relations with other Asian countries have been limited. Ceylon, Malaysia and Singapore are markets for Burmese rice. The Philippines has never developed close relations with Burma. Burma formally recognized Cambodia and Laos in 1954, although contacts between the countries were still limited in the early 1960's. The three share the problem of maintaining their independence and nonalignment.

Ties between Indonesia and Burma have been fairly close. Burma denied the use of its airfields and airspace to Dutch planes during Indonesia's struggle for independence. The governments of the two countries shared and cooperated closely at Bandung. Sukarno's confrontation policy and the withdrawal of Indonesia from the United Nations were reproved by Burma, but the re-orientation of Djakarta's politics after Sukarno's fall from power and the fact that Indonesia is Burma's most important export market indicate that differences will be minimized (see ch. 23, Foreign Economic Relations).

The government of Burma has withheld diplomatic recognition from both the governments in Korea and in Vietnam, although all four maintain consuls general in Rangoon. An example of Burma's desire to mitigate conflict in the region is its offer to serve as a site for negotiating parties in the Vietnam conflict.

SPECIAL RELATIONSHIPS

A number of countries form a special category so far as Burma's foreign relations are concerned. Yugoslavia, Israel and Japan share the problem of hostile neighbors and of histories or com-

mitments considered threatening to world peace. These countries are relatively small, have demonstrated energy and efficiency in organizing their productive potential and reveal a pragmatic approach to solving national problems, and all feel a need for friends with common interests, rooted in the problem of building viable nation states in a hostile environment. Burma feels secure in dealing with these nations which are not close enough or of sufficient size to exert undue influence on it. Yet they all have characteristics admired by Burma.

Burma consistently has gone on record in defending Israel's position. In 1954 an Asian Socialist Conference, scheduled to be held in Indonesia, was shifted to Burma after the Indonesian foreign minister refused to admit Israel. At the Bandung and Belgrade neutralist conferences Burma strongly opposed anti-Israel resolutions instigated by the Arab states. In 1955, Israeli-Burmese relations developed in a more definitive manner. Trade and economic cooperation agreements were signed, and, subsequently, Israel has assisted Burma with its security problems by setting up four kibbutz-style self-defense hamlets in Shan State. Israel also sold more than 20 fighter aircraft to Burma and sent instructors to teach flying and maintenance.

Yugoslavia has been admired by the government of Burma for its attempts at creating a modern industrial state and its resistance to domination by the Soviet Union. Marshal Tito's 1955 visit to Rangoon can be compared only to those of Nehru and Chou En-lai for popular turnout. Yugoslavia has offered Burma military training facilities and equipment and credits for agricultural and industrial projects in exchange for rice.

Burma's relations with Japan are complicated by a healthy respect for that country's economic progress mixed with resentment over Japanese subjugation during World War II. In 1966, Burma's foreign minister asserted that Japan was the most progressive nation in the East despite lack of natural resources. After difficult negotiations Burma and Japan signed a war reparations agreement providing the equivalent of \$200 million in payments and the investment of \$50 million in joint ventures over a 10-year period.

RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES

The United States soon after World War II became fully committed to the Cold War against communism. United States priorities were concentrated on Europe, and its Asian policy of building a strong China was frustrated by mainland China falling to a Communist regime. Gradually a new outlook on Asia developed

along the lines supporting the aspirations for freedom and economic development of Asian peoples in accordance with the principles of the United Nations and resisting any attempts at aggression. United States policy became practice with the outbreak in 1950 of war in Korea. Besides committing troops under United Nations command to a war on the mainland of Asia, it concluded an Economic Cooperation Agreement with many Asian nations, including Burma, which received \$20 million and nearly 200 technical advisers within 3 years.

Military and economic assistance, exchanges under the Fulbright program, United States Information Service library and field programs and the enthusiasm of the United States Government for Burma's resistance to communism pointed towards a future of close and harmonious relations. The troubles over Nationalist Chinese troops in Burma destroyed this. The United States foreign aid program was discontinued because the Burmese Government felt the United States was cooperating with Nationalist China. The Technical Cooperation Mission and its projects were unpopular with the Burmese press. The Korean war eased Burma's need for foreign exchange with unexpected earnings from the sale of rice.

In 1956 the United States again embarked on a short-lived small-scale aid program for Burma. The sale of surplus agricultural goods for local currency, the purchase of rice, a \$25 million loan and the training of Burmese technicians in the United States were agreed upon. Aid was extended on a piecemeal basis which, in retrospect, the government of Burma felt was not related to its needs but to the United States' position in the Cold War.

Since 1962, General Ne Win's policy of eliminating foreign influence has affected the United States along with the United Kingdom, India and China. The teaching of English was eliminated in the primary schools. The Fulbright, Asia, and Ford Foundation programs were discontinued, and the United States Information Service library activities were closed. These happenings do not signify ill will between the governments but, instead, are reflections of General Ne Win's determination to reduce foreign presences in Burma.

United States relations with the Ne Win government are based on a mutual understanding of the other's foreign policy positions. Burma supports the United States' position limiting nuclear testing and restricting armaments despite Communist Chinese pressure, and the United States respects Burma's wish to follow a policy of neutrality and noninvolvement.

RELATIONS WITH GREAT BRITAIN

Burma's attitude toward Great Britain has been marked by a respect for British ideals and principles and a fear of Western imperialism. Although the British attempted to resume the role of mother country after World War II, the peaceful and successful independence negotiations between Britain and the Burmese assume great importance, particularly when contrasted to the activities of the Communists in the country who went underground in an attempt to overthrow the new government.

Burma's leaders have recognized the debt owed Great Britain, both in obtaining independence peacefully and in combatting the insurrections that followed. Under the Nu-Atlee agreement, which gave Burma its independence, the British agreed to the cancellation of debts owed it and agreed to provide arms and training to the Burmese army for a 4-year period. The arms provided proved vital to maintaining the integrity of the Burmese state. Burma's failure to join the Commonwealth appears to have been caused more by lack of awareness that it would evolve into a multiracial community of nations than by anti-British feelings.

Great Britain, like other countries, has seen its programs and activities eliminated under the Ne Win government. British libraries and schools have been closed, and its commercial enterprises in Burma have been nationalized. Great Britain's preoccupation with other problems has limited its intercourse with Burma but has not diminished the substantial goodwill maintained between the two.

RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION

The experience of the Soviet Union in building a modern industrial state has impressed observers in Burma, where the leadership has generally referred to itself as Marxist but not Communist. The newly independent government of U Nu, however, was rebuffed by the Soviets, who were slow in affording diplomatic recognition, who publicly referred to the Burmese leaders as "running dogs of the imperialists" and who persuaded the Burmese Communists to go underground and try to overthrow the government.

The government of Burma, seeking peaceful relations with all countries, exchanged ambassadors with the Soviet Union in 1951, but it was not until 1954 that the first real contacts, in the form of cultural missions, were exchanged. The first Burma-Soviet trade treaty, signed in 1955, set the pattern for subsequent agreements. Soviet grant aid has been rejected. Assistance is paid for rather than letting it be used to create unwanted obligations. From 1955

through 1967 technical, cultural and defense missions were exchanged periodically, and in 1967, Russian was being taught in Burma's university system.

Underlying the Burmese-Soviet relationship there has always been respect for the Marxist experiment coupled with the desire to avoid interference and totalitarian methods in building a Burmese socialist society. Prime Minister U Nu expressed this view, which has been adhered to consistently, in a 1958 speech to his colleagues.

The Soviet Government has shown caution in its approach to the Ne Win government. A leading Soviet expert on Burma has written that Ne Win's policies are supported by all progressive organizations but that the government does not recognize the special role of the working class and the decisive significance of Marxism-Leninism in theory and in the party struggle for building scientific socialism.

The Burmese leadership's initial admiration of the Soviet Union has been tempered by political experience. Early Soviet attitudes and the Hungarian intervention along with Russian technical assistance have both been noted. Soviet caution and Burma's industrial needs have resulted in continual but limited cooperation.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The government of Burma supports international organizations in principle and has participated actively when it felt they could help solve problems related to the country's well-being. Burma was an early member of the Colombo Plan, has participated actively in its student and technical exchanges, and has offered to act as host for its 1967 conference. The country in 1967 was represented at the 18-nation disarmament conference in Geneva, has subscribed to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and was a member of the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Its attitude toward the newly formed Asian Development Bank was one of scepticism.

Burma joined the United Nations and specialized agencies soon after attaining independence. Initial enthusiasm for the United Nations as a defense against aggression by larger nations has waned because of the Cold War atmosphere encountered in its councils, but Burma has always supported the United Nations in principle. Burma offered to send troops to participate in the peacekeeping action in the Gaza Strip in 1956 and dispatched a small group to the Congo in support of United Nations forces there.

Burma, and particularly Prime Minister U Nu, was one of the prime movers at the early neutralist conferences, but General Ne Win appears to believe that such gatherings serve little practical purpose. The Ne Win government has indicated that it is less interested in ideological statements and resolution passing than in agreements which point towards assistance and stable relations with other nations.

CHAPTER 16

PUBLIC INFORMATION

The government controls the output of all communications media. It owns and operates the one radio station in the country, the only wire service permitted to distribute news and the only firm licensed to import printed material. Five of the nine leading daily newspapers are government organs, and the others are required to conform to government policy. Films, books and other printed material are subject to censorship by government agencies.

The government does, in fact, allow news from a variety of sources to be distributed. Its policy is to censor news of a controversial or polemic nature but to permit straight reporting of events. Its wire service distributes news from both Eastern and Western news agencies and notes the source of information, which is always printed after the news stories. A wide variety of foreign periodicals is imported and sold on public newstands. The publications of the embassies in Rangoon, though first censored, are distributed in limited numbers.

Government policy, which allows relatively free access to foreign news, is more restrictive concerning events within Burma itself. News media give descriptive accounts of government programs in detail but refrain from discussing national policy, except to praise contributions toward the development of a socialist state. Under the second Ne Win government informal political discussion is inhibited by the popular belief that many supposedly private citizens work as security agents. This constitutes an unusual situation for the Burmese, who had become accustomed to speaking freely about their government and country.

COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

The country's communications media reach only a small segment of the population. Most newspapers are printed in Rangoon; movie theaters are found primarily in the few urban areas; there is no television; and the transportation system does not provide easy access to all parts of the country. About 85 percent of the population consists of rural people who rarely travel far from home.

Language differences and illiteracy further impede ease in communications. Approximately 15 percent of the population belongs

to ethnic minority groups that have their own languages, although some know Burmese. Approximately 90 percent of the people understand Burmese, and those with a formal education know English. An estimated one-third can read and understand simple news stories.

Face-to-face communication and the opinion of local leaders are important, even in urban areas, such as Rangoon. Rangoon is divided into 35 wards, each with a headman appointed by the police. Within these wards an intimacy and homogeneity similar to village life has been developed. The average person turns to his ward headman as an opinion leader just as the villager looks to his local leader for guidance (see ch. 14, Political Dynamics).

The solidarity of the ward is reinforced by sports, reading and religious clubs. Reading clubs, composed of a few individuals who jointly subscribe to newspapers and periodicals, are of particular importance. The Burmese, whether in the city or in the village, like to read in groups, where the less informed may directly question their better educated companions and obtain the interpretations of headmen. This practice has resulted in a general uniformity of views within each village or ward.

Burmese in general, and the government in particular, tend to create an idealized picture of the present as contrasted to the more difficult past. After independence the colonial period was viewed as particularly harsh; when the dominant political party split in 1958 the first 10 years of independence were characterized as ones in which true democracy did not exist; and after the 1962 coup the military leaders described the preceding years as ones in which the nation had nearly foundered on inefficiency and corruption.

Rumor and gossip are widespread, particularly in Rangoon. A reluctance on the part of government leaders to give out information has meant that interested citizens usually have to guess about internal government activities. Rumor is given added weight by the general acceptance of speculation, partly because of a national characteristic of not wanting to contradict or imply that another does not know what is occurring (see ch. 12, Social Values; ch. 17, Political Values and Attitudes).

NEWSPAPERS

Before 1962 the press was relatively free, although the government imposed restrictions when necessary. During the critical 1948-49 period of insurrection the government censored all news and opinion and, because of its critical attitudes, closed the oldest Burmese-language daily, *Thooryah*, which was founded in 1911. In 1954 the government party attempted to pass a bill making

criticism of government leaders a criminal offense, but the Burma Journalists Association and the minority opposition parties effectively opposed this action. Between 1948 and 1962 the press, despite times of official hostility and its own weaknesses, fulfilled in part the function of an opposition party and of a lobby pressure group.

The Ne Win government has controlled the activities of the press since 1962. It has its own newspapers, censors news and opinion in others and operates its own wire service. In 1966 it decreed that newspapers could be printed only in Burmese and English; this eliminated 7 Indian and Pakistani and 5 Chinese newspapers, including the Communist-oriented *Freedom Daily*. The number of daily newspapers dropped from 31 before 1962 to fewer than 12 in 1967.

After assuming office the Revolutionary Council promulgated the Printers and Publishers Registration Act, which decreed that publishers of newspapers and magazines must apply for registration certificates every year. A Council spokesman added that all publishing would be subject to extensive regulation. Unofficial regulatory measures may also be taken through the control of newsprint and ink, both of which are government monopolies.

Foreign wire services have been denied permission to distribute news. News Agency Burma (NAB), created and operated by the government, has exclusive rights to distribute material from the wire services of TASS (Soviet Union), United Press International and Associated Press (United States), Reuters (Great Britain), Agence France-Presse (France) and New China News Agency (Communist China). When a news item coming from one of the wire services is printed, the source is always indicated. Reports from different services concerning the same event often appear side by side in the press, which gives the Burmese a unique opportunity to read news stories from agencies representing countries that profess differing ideologies.

The Ne Win regime created two dailies as official government organs, the English-language *Working People's Daily* and its Burmese-language counterpart, *Pyi Thu Nazin*. Each has its own staff and offices, although both are published by the Ministry of Information and Culture (see table 6).

The *Working People's Daily*, which has a circulation of 31,000, has widespread coverage of both national and international news. Agriculture and education are given extensive coverage and reflect the importance given to both by the government. Editorial themes encourage full participation in the various national development programs, the creation of Peasants Councils, the strengthening

Table 6. *Leading Daily Newspapers in Burma, 1967 **

<i>Publication</i>	<i>Publisher</i>	<i>Circulation</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
<i>Working People's Daily</i>	Ministry of Information and Culture	31,000	Official mouthpiece of the government; English language.
<i>Pyi Thu Nazin</i> (Working People's Daily)	—do—	22,000	Official mouthpiece of the government; Burmese-language counterpart of the <i>Working People's Daily</i> .
<i>Guardian</i>	—do—	11,000	Formerly independent; now a government organ; English language.
<i>Botataung</i> (Vanguard)	—do—	11,000	Editor is independent Communist; anti-United States; anti-Chinese Communist; formerly independent; now a government organ.
<i>Kye Hmon</i> (Mirror)	—do—	45,000	Most widely read daily; formerly independent; now a government organ.
<i>Yango</i> (Rangoon Daily)	U Nyan Khin	22,000	Largest circulation outside of Rangoon.
<i>Hanthawaddy</i>	U Kyin Hoe	18,000	Independent, influential; Burmese-language.
<i>Yma Ah'lai</i> (New Light of Burma)	U Pon	6,000	Independent, weak; operated by employees; circulation dropping rapidly, Burmese-language.
<i>Ludu</i>	n.a.	5,000	Only daily printed in Mandalay; anti-United States; pro-Chinese Communist.

* All newspapers are published in Burmese and printed in Rangoon unless otherwise noted.

Source: Adapted from *The Editor and Publisher International Yearbook*, New York, 1967.

of Workers Councils and in steadfast efforts to improve the socialist economy.

The *Working People's Daily* is used to stimulate government officials through criticisms in articles and editorials. During the 1967 Peasant Seminar editorials chided officials for failing to give the peasants meaningful answers to their questions and urged the authorities to correct this situation. Articles favorably describing the profit motive, officially opposed by the national leadership, have also appeared.

International news is usually reported objectively, but an anti-Western bias may often be detected. Criticism of the United States

Central Intelligence Agency, particularly when attributed to Americans themselves, is noted in detail.

Three formerly independent dailies, *Guardian*, *Botataung* (Vanguard) and *Kye Hmon* (Mirror), have been taken over by the Ministry of Information and Culture. These newspapers are, in fact, government organs, but they do not have official status as such. Of the three, only the *Guardian* is printed in English.

The *Guardian*, a daily with a distinguished history, has maintained its circulation at a level of 11,000 subscribers. Most of its space is devoted to international news received through the NAB from foreign wire services, principally the United States and the Soviet Union. A column that deals favorably with events in Communist countries and is written by a Communist appears each day. There is practically no news of Burmese affairs, but that which does appear is favorably slanted.

Botataung has a circulation of some 11,000. Its editor, an independent Communist, is a civilian theorist for the Revolutionary Council and is strongly committed to its Burmese Way to Socialism program. *Botataung* is both anti-Chinese Communist and anti-West. Articles dealing with capitalism, the Central Intelligence Agency and increasing crime rates in the United States are frequent and often present the advantages to be derived from socialism in eliminating injustices and in nation building. The primary international concern of *Botataung* appears to be that of guarding the rights and interests of developing nations.

Kye Hmon, with a circulation of 45,000, is the most widely read daily. It concentrates on national news, particularly concerning agriculture and the economy.

The nongovernment Burmese-language dailies are *Yango* (*Rangoon Daily*), *Hanthawaddy*, *Yma Ah'lai* (*New Light of Burma*) and *Ludu*. *Yango* concentrates on international news and frequently editorializes on Vietnam, Indian affairs and other questions of special importance to Asia. It has 22,000 subscribers and the largest circulation outside of Rangoon. *Hanthawaddy*, an independent and influential daily, has a circulation of 18,000. It covers national and international news on a sophisticated level and prints student and literary supplements. Its main concerns include the problems of developing nations, world food production, international relations and the arms race.

Yma Ah'lai, founded in 1914, is the oldest Burmese-language daily still being published. It is an independent but a weak newspaper. Its circulation dropped from 15,000 in 1961 to 6,000 in 1967. In 1965 the owner turned it over to the employees to operate. The newspaper is conservative and optimistic in tone and avoids any position that might be controversial.

Ludu is the only daily printed in Mandalay. It has a strong pro-Chinese Communist, anti-United States editorial policy. United States policy in Vietnam is strongly criticized, and the danger of the war's affecting other Asian countries is also noted. Its editorials praise Burmese traditions but assert the need for specific improvements in education, medicine and agriculture.

There is little variation in the size, format and makeup of the leading daily newspapers. All are of standard size and consist of approximately eight pages. Over half the space in the English-language dailies is devoted to international news. The Burmese-language dailies give more space to national and local news but also have good coverage of international events. One or two editorials appear near the front, and sports news receives approximately a half page near the back. The daily radio program and movie features are noted, but there is almost no advertising.

Since 1962 part of the press has played the role of government organ; another part has independently but actively supported the government; and a third part has continued its function as a distributor of news but has remained relatively silent on questions of national policy. It appears likely that the government uses the press to present attitudes and ideas on both domestic and foreign policy in order to test the response of those most concerned. This is particularly noticeable in the different attitudes taken toward Communist China, in the criticism of public officials and in articles dealing with the profit motive.

RADIO, FILMS AND PUBLISHING

Radio listening is very popular and accessible to virtually everyone. There are an estimated 335,000 sets in the country, the majority being shortwave. Radios receive maximum usage because the volume of privately owned sets is habitually turned up high and enables people in the streets to listen; the owners of teashops, where Burmese go for conversation and gossip, have radios in use; and the army is provided with sets which are placed in the central meeting places of villages in the most remote regions.

There is one broadcasting station, the government-owned Burma Broadcasting Service (BBS). It transmits mediumwave broadcasts at 5040 and 7120 kilocycles and shortwave at 955 kilocycles. It uses 50 kilowatts of power.

Approximately two-thirds of its programs are in Burmese and one-third in English. Thirty minutes a day are broadcast in the Shan and Karen languages and 15 minutes daily in Kayah, Kachin and Chin. Programs are devoted to folklore and popular music, education, news and government information. News is presented in a noncontroversial manner and emphasizes national affairs and

the progress of government programs. Each week 2.4 hours are devoted to educational programs and 3.1 hours to national development. Some 25 percent of the total educational time is broadcast on the secondary school level, and 28 percent is devoted to vocational training. The out-of-school educational and national development programs allot 32 percent of their time for rural development, 37 percent for civics, 23 percent for science and art and 8 percent for health and hygiene. Occasionally, programs are devoted to the teaching of English.

The government is improving the BBS staff by providing opportunities to study broadcasting in the United States, the Soviet Union, Communist China and Great Britain. In 1967 six men were sent to the English-speaking countries and four to the Communist countries. They were scheduled for two years of training, after which they were to be replaced by other trainees.

The Burmese are keen moviegoers. There are 454 theaters in the country; these have approximately 400,000 seats. In 1964, 65 films were produced in Burma, and in 1965 there were 81. A film council has been created to give governmental direction and assistance to the industry.

The Motion Picture Agency Board, the Film Censor Board and the Film Academy Award Board, government created and operated, have not been used effectively by the government for propaganda. At the 1965 Film Awards ceremony the Minister of Information and Culture expressed his displeasure with the Burmese film industry and lamented the fact that none of their films had a nation-building theme or contributed to national orientation of the people. Newspapers have also criticized the industry for its slavish copying of United States films that concentrate on themes of physical love (see ch. 10, Artistic and Intellectual Expression).

The Motion Picture Agency Board imports approximately 200 films a year, primarily from the United States and India. Most imports are love stories, comedies and action films. In 1963 imports from the United States were stopped in protest against the American marketing practice of renting rather than selling its films. Imports were resumed in 1965 after negotiations were completed between Ministry of Information and Culture officials and United States film producers.

There are 13 publishing houses in the country, which published 2,195 titles in 1965. Approximately 35 translations are published each year; over 90 percent are from English or classical Greek and Latin works. Approximately 60 percent of these works deal with geography, literature and history, and the rest concern science and religion.

The government is dissatisfied with contemporary writers and their works. The Minister of Information and Culture has urged writers to think of art and literature for the people's sake, and a *Working People's Daily* editorial stated that only 10 percent of the books published in 1965 would help the country. It asserted that literary screening would be necessary but suggested that the writers themselves should ascertain if their works are really worthwhile.

Only Ava House Limited, a state firm, is permitted to import books, periodicals and other printed material. The import policy is permissive, and periodicals and books from many countries are available. About 2,000 copies of *Time* are sold weekly, and 12 copies of the *New York Times* are imported for distribution to top-ranking government officials.

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

The Revolutionary Council is the policymaking body and the final authority in both the party and the government. It uses government organs to impress citizens with government programs, and it uses party organs to stimulate interest in ideological and nation-building themes. Half of the newspapers and the BBS are government organs.

The Education Department of the Burmese Socialist Program Party is responsible for Party propaganda. It has published in book form the speeches of Ne Win, a collection of articles on Party affairs and the biographies of the 1938–48 resistance fighters. Plans call for a compilation of Burmese history and a work on the customs and cultures of the various national groups. It periodically publishes the *Party Affairs Bulletin* and the *International News Bulletin*.

Forward, published twice a month by the Ministry of Information and Culture, is the official organ of the Revolutionary Council. Its circulation of 90,000 makes it the most widely distributed periodical in the country. Themes of national unity and economic development are emphasized, but articles on current affairs, traditional culture and sports appear regularly.

The cover of a 1966 issue of *Forward* gives an indication of the attitudes of the Council. It is a reproduction of a painting entitled, "The Nation Marches to Socialism." Various figures are depicted wearing regional dress and the traditional *longyi* (see Glossary). Leading the group is a person in Western clothing, wearing shoes rather than sandals and prominently displaying a watch on his raised forearm. In the background are five small stars around a larger star, the symbol of national unity. No monk or religious symbolism is portrayed (see ch. 17, Political Values and Attitudes).

Government seminars and national holidays also provide opportunities for the Revolutionary Council to present its message to the people. The most important formal contact between the government and local leaders is the annual, weeklong Peasants Seminar and the Workers Seminar. Between 2,000 and 3,000 delegates attend both occasions, where officials review and outline their programs. Freedom of speech, criticism and questions are allowed, but the communication is primarily one way, from the officials to the delegates, because of the lack of experience of both groups in this type of activity and the clearly dominant role of the officials.

The Ne Win government has given particular emphasis to Workers Day, May 1, and Peasants Day, May 2. The Workers Seminar and the Peasants Seminar are held the week before these holidays, and the delegates remain in Rangoon for the celebration. Speeches by top-ranking officials, parades and rallies are followed by a banquet for the delegates given at the State House by Chairman and Mrs. Ne Win.

National holidays are the occasion for mass rallies, demonstrations, exhibitions and speechmaking. Since 1948 Independence Day, January 4, and Union Day, February 12, have been celebrated throughout the country. Union Day commemorates the 1947 Panglong Conference at which national and ethnic minority leaders reached agreement on the formation of the Union of Burma.

FOREIGN INFORMATION

The United States, Great Britain, West Germany, Australia and nine Communist countries have diplomatic missions with active information programs in Burma. All operate under the same government restrictions, which severely limit the amount of information that may be distributed and prohibit the use of controversial, polemical or ideological material. The Ministry of Information and Culture reviews all material to be printed and, after printing, is responsible for its distribution. Films and exhibits, which may be shown only on diplomatic premises, must be approved by the Ministry before exhibition.

Government restrictions have meant that the foreign missions follow similar patterns in presenting their views. The program of the United States Information Service is typical. One thousand copies of a daily news bulletin and 5,000 copies of a monthly bulletin are sent to the Ministry of Information and Culture for distribution, and documentary and educational films are given to the central library of the Burmese Government to be used as it wishes. The United States also has succeeded in obtaining invitations for sports figures to hold clinics, and the Communist countries have successfully introduced cultural troupes into the country.

The government disapproves more of foreign control of information material than of the information itself. It has closed all foreign-directed schools, libraries and cultural organizations but accepted as a gift half of the books in the United States Information Service library. Each year it accepts for distribution another gift of approximately 12,000 books.

Another example of government restriction is the prohibition of language teaching by foreign missions. The Soviet Union, like all other countries, was subject to this regulation, but it capitalized on Burma's emphasis on science and its need for textbooks by providing instructors in Russian and several thousand Russian-language science textbooks for use in the university system.

Radio, because of its popularity, is used extensively by foreign countries. The British Broadcasting Corporation daily beams two 30-minute information programs into the country. Radio Peking broadcasts a steady stream of propaganda in Burmese; much of it is devoted to vilifying the United States. More popular than either of these is All-India Radio, which concentrates on music and entertainment. The Voice of America broadcasts 4 hours a day in Burmese and English. Its programs, devoted to sports, science, agriculture, news and music, are heard daily by an estimated 2,000 listeners.

CHAPTER 17

POLITICAL VALUES AND ATTITUDES

Burmese society is composed of disparate ethnic groups and social classes who share a common belief in Buddhism. The minority ethnic groups and most Burmans are villagers who are strongly attached to their traditional customs. National leadership is provided by a political elite which emerged from the struggle for independence committed to transforming their traditional society into a modern nation-state.

There is a sharp division in political life between the small political elite and the general population. National policies do not originate from a citizenry translating its desires through influential groups to government leaders; they are formulated by the members of the political elite who aspire to change their country into a socialist welfare state and to maintain its Burmese Buddhist identity.

The government that assumed power in 1962 has placed even greater stress on modernization than did its predecessors. Its formula, which is termed revolutionary, has been strongly leftist and has emphasized the provision of direction and leadership from the top. The goal is to change the values and attitudes of the strongly traditionalist people.

The conflict of forces between the tradition-oriented society and the change-oriented leadership is moderated by at least three factors: Buddhism provides a core of shared belief and attitude; the slow pace of life and action prevents change of a magnitude that would cause serious maladjustments; and the leadership emphasizes that change does not mean copying any other national model but that it must take place within a Burmese context.

An individual's primary identification is with his family. No other institution places greater demands or is less vulnerable to external influence. Secondary identification is with one's ethnic kin. For the Burman majority this constitutes identification with the nation, but for the ethnic minorities it means a desire for state autonomy within the union. Historical animosities, exacerbated by the activities of rebel groups, have impeded cross-cultural communication and trade and made a feeling of association with a national unit more difficult.

THE VILLAGE DWELLER

Approximately 85 percent of the population is made up of rural people whose world seldom extends beyond the village. These people do not closely identify with the national government, which to them is something to be aware of and to discuss but not to influence. Their traditional fear of central authority has led them to look upon the government more as something to be protected from than to participate in. The principles of popular sovereignty and representative government, however, are accepted in the form of voting, and great interest is taken in the personalities competing in elections.

Any government of the country, whether civilian or military, must emphasize independence and advocate neutralism, socialism and Buddhism to gain popular support. Recognizing this, party programs before the Ne Win coup in 1962 showed few differences in content, thus contributing to the paramountcy of personal qualities during elections.

Villagers have a commonly held set of views concerning power. These views determine the political life in the village and become important on the national level when they relate to the character and legitimacy of government leaders. These concepts of power relate to the individual but not to the notion of government as an organization.

Pon (power) is highly valued. It must be pursued in an indirect manner and, when attained, must not be obvious. To have legitimate power one must also have *gon* (virtue), which is derived from the moral content of one's social relationships. One cannot be virtuous and moral without also being religious. Religiosity plus economic well-being combine to give one *awza* (authority or right to command). *Gon* plus *awza* equal *pon*. To maintain *pon* one cannot be ruthless or act with impunity. *Ah-nah-de* (restraint) must be evident in the exercise of power.

Hereditary headmen are still recognized in the villages, but an individual with *gon*, *awza* and *ah-nah-de* may have more *pon*. If so, he should demonstrate the six qualities of a leader—industry, alertness, mercy, patience, judgment and perspective—the sum of which is *nyaka gon chaukpa*. The *pon* of the village leader makes his attitudes influential among villagers, who follow his lead in regard to politics and base their decisions regarding political parties on his example (see ch. 14, Political Dynamics).

THE POLITICAL ELITE

The individuals who participate in national politics constitute a political elite. They are few in number, and their experience with contemporary political practices has given them attitudes and

characteristics which differentiate them from the majority of the population.

The most important element in politics has been the relationship between groups and factions of the elite. At independence the new political leaders came primarily from a group of young urban intellectuals without practical experience in government who achieved prominence by being most vocal in demanding an end to colonialism. Assisting them in an administrative role was a group of men, usually older, who were also educated and who, in addition, had acquired some administrative experience through participation in the British colonial government. The difference in their viewpoints often prevented these two groups from effectively functioning together in their efforts to govern the country.

Most of the political leaders gained fame at an early age, some becoming ministers and prominent public figures in their early thirties. They saw themselves as heroes, above routine and petty detail, who would lead in the development of their country. They were also imbued with the Buddhist belief that if one's intentions were good, failure to achieve stated ends mattered little. Their countrymen saw things differently: when announced programs were not carried out, widespread doubts concerning the honesty and intentions of the political leaders resulted. Some leaders responded by cynically ceasing to advocate the policies they believed to be necessary and, instead, identifying themselves with any cause they believed might restore them to popular favor.

The administrators who emerged from the British colonial civil service had a different background. During their apprenticeship they had developed a sense of being superior to most of their countrymen by reason of their education and the prestige they enjoyed as members of the government. They had trusted the British, felt that the adoption of Western practices would be best for their country and looked forward to taking over the reins of government when the British left the country. When, during the preparations for independence, the British turned to the nationalists rather than to them for the country's new leaders, they were embittered and disillusioned and felt that the new political leaders were enjoying the greater status and prestige which should rightfully be theirs.

The attitudes of the administrators reflect this history. Some performed admirably under difficult circumstances, but the majority, because of their higher status under the previous system, were dubious about change (see ch. 14, Political Dynamics).

The administrators' apprenticeship emphasized procedure and form rather than rationality in decisionmaking. Important matters were often delayed by the amount of procedural detail, limiting

productive work to problems of an immediate nature. Procedure was reinforced because the older ministers often felt insecure within their own ministries, and adherence to form reassured them.

The new civil servants are trained in the same manner as the old. Loyalty to superiors is emphasized, but the conflict between the British-trained and Burmese-trained generations has resulted in a mutual lack of confidence. The younger administrators feel they are more competent than their superiors, who see the young as cynical and opportunistic.

The emphasis of the second Ne Win government on administrative decision has helped to mitigate the administrators' feelings of ambivalence and reduced social stature and to eliminate the conflict between the administrators and the politicians. The government seeks to further improve the administrative situation by providing scholarships for study abroad.

POLITICAL CUSTOMS

Only persons who hold office are believed to be important political figures. Individuals who do not hold high positions feel they have no influence over the outcome of events. The argument that a political act had been carried out by one who did not have clearly defined authority would be met with disbelief.

Policymaking in the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) was limited to U Nu and his intimates. Under the Ne Win government it takes place within the Revolutionary Council, and final decisions are made by the chairman. Formal channels of communication between citizens have never fully developed, leaving public demonstrations as the most effective technique for the expression of opinion.

Information is a key to power and is carefully guarded. U Nu, for example, gave information to some officials and withheld it from others in order to curtail power seekers.

Because information about government activity is seldom complete or accurate, people who base their views on such information are considered to be ignorant of reality. This renders criticism of the government difficult because talking in terms of information available to the public makes one's credibility questionable and is considered impolite and boorish.

The only clearly defined political roles are those of leader and follower. Individuals frustrated in their attempts to achieve primary positions within political organizations tend to break off and form their own. This fracturing of loyalties has led to a multiplicity of parties based on personal following and to underground activity by various groups. The inherent instability in this type of

situation lessened antagonism that might have resulted from the 1962 coup (see ch. 12, Social Values).

Authority, when clearly defined, is viewed favorably. It is an important aspect of cooperative action and is responded to more readily than is ideology. Little enthusiasm was shown for the ill-defined goals of the AFPFL, but the efforts of the caretaker government to restore a system similar to the more familiar colonial administrative government received a more favorable response.

Despite the suspension of constitutional government and elective leadership following the 1962 coup, attitudes toward them remain favorable. A parliament, open courts of justice, a free press, a non-political civil service and political parties were the ideals sought by the civilian government. In 1967 they were only ideal aspirations, but educated citizens continued to desire them as political norms.

SOCIALISM

Socialism, as a political ideology, was introduced through Marxism in the 1930's. The notion of capitalism extending itself through imperialism seemed relevant to the anticolonial nationalist leaders who turned to Marx for their political thought. To make the alien ideology of Marxism relevant to the people it was synthesized with Buddhism and explained in Buddhist terminology.

Buddhists believe in the original existence of an ideal state, in which all men shared common property. Then men began to hoard rice; and property, theft and punishment, all viewed disfavorably by the Buddhist, came into being. At this point a differentiation developed between those who were to become identified as socialists and those, led by U Nu, who used Marxism as a political reinforcement for their Buddhist beliefs. The nascent socialists associated the origin of property with the rise of classes, class conflict, capitalism and imperialism. U Nu emphasized the economic impoverishment of the masses and related it to the declining spiritual atmosphere in the country.

U Nu advocated the economic betterment of all as the means for improving the spiritual life of the country. A few wealthy and many poor meant that the many could not practice acts of piety and meditation but had to struggle to feed themselves. He related the declining membership in the monasteries to the economic decline in the country.

Buddhism was emphasized in developing a philosophical rationale for economic improvement. It was viewed as the higher truth designed to eliminate universal suffering, as compared to Marxism, or the lower truth, designed only to eliminate economic suffering.

After independence U Nu agreed to give the socialists in the AFPFL major responsibility for modernizing the economy. The socialists not only noted the similarities between Buddhism and Marxism, but they equated them. Five fundamentals—people's democracy, people's education, people's economy, people's health and people's social security—were stated to be the basic concepts of both philosophies. In practice, this meant a party program resembling that of the British Labor Party. Nationalization was the foundation of party doctrine, and social welfare was its goal.

In 1958, at the Third All-Burma Congress of the AFPFL, U Nu rejected Marxism as the guiding philosophy of the party and disassociated himself from earlier attempts to relate dialectical materialism and Buddhism. Socialism from the top (or communism) was denounced in favor of true socialism which came from the people. The creation of one party and the autocratic measures necessary to impose state capitalism were declared unsuitable for Burma's needs. The use of force as a political technique was denounced, and personal morality was emphasized as the inner force within true socialism.

Socialism, whether interpreted as emphasizing Marxism, Buddhism or the state, may be considered one of the basic tenets of government. Under U Nu true socialism was correlated with Buddhism and considered in accord with the people's wishes. The Ne Win government, however, has shifted the emphasis from U Nu's people's socialism to the Marxist-Leninist notion of a vanguard party leading the society toward a socialist state.

SEPARATISM

Nationalism provided the integrating force around which disparate ethnic groups formed during the struggle for independence. After independence the struggle shifted to that of containing the desire of the ethnic minorities to maintain their own identity relatively independent of the national government. Maintaining national unity has been the paramount problem of independent Burma.

The minority ethnic groups, who represent approximately 15 percent of the population, have distinct languages and cultures which they wish to retain. They fear that a unitary state would be dominated by the 85 percent Burman majority, subjecting their cultural identity to majority group pressures and limiting their opportunities in national life. Their trust in Aung San led to agreement at the 1947 Panglong Conference to become a part of the union and to retain certain rights within their own states as well as the right to opt out of the union after 10 years. Separatist movements have plagued the government since that time, particularly

since 1962, when the Ne Win government declared its intention of making Burma a unitary state.

Differences among the ethnic groups are pronounced and widely recognized. The Burmans believe that their cultural development is superior to that of the other Burmese and that their preponderant numbers make them the logical group to set standards for the country. The Shans are also considered to have a well-developed culture and to be good Buddhists. The Chins and Kachins live in the more remote hill regions and are stereotyped as rural people who make good soldiers. The Mons and Arakanese are more akin to, than different from, the Burmans.

The Karens and the Burmans often reveal latent feelings of hostility. The Karens, used by the British to repress Burman nationalist demonstrations, are considered good soldiers. The fact that they did not participate in the nationalist movement is attributed to their relatively independent status under the British and the conversion of many of their number to Christianity. Karen university students have a reputation for performing works of social service through their clubs. Karen and Chin Christians are likely to doubt the Burmans' capacity for hard work and persistent effort.

Language differences are another impediment to national integration. Burmese, the language spoken by the Burmans, is the national language, but English is considered advantageous for participation in national life. Thus, a Shan who is instructed to learn Burmese will feel hesitant when he realizes that to participate effectively at the national level he must also know English.

Despite such differences, no serious proposal has been offered by any ethnic minority that would threaten the disruption of the union. Although they recognize their internal differences which cause friction and sometimes conflict, the Burmese realize their relationship to the central government. Observers feel that the elimination of bandits and insurrectionists from the countryside will permit increased domestic trade and contact and alleviate the cultural isolation which has proved an obstacle to national unity.

THE MILITARY IN POLITICAL LIFE

The top-ranking military officers who assumed power in 1962 are nationalist, socialist and rigidly moralistic. As members of the student generation of the 1930's they became familiar with and committed to Marxism and socialism. Their nationalist fervor derives from unpleasant experiences under colonial rule, under Japanese domination and, since independence, with the major world powers. Their moralistic emphasis ranges from the imprisonment of fellow officers involved in corrupt practices to the banning of beauty contests.

Below the top level, military personnel are predominantly Burmans who retain close ties with village life. Few have more than a high school education, and the majority remain close to their Buddhist culture. Their experience was primarily in rural areas and included the task of making farmers into soldiers and fighting rebel groups.

Members of the Revolutionary Council emphasize science, rationalism and humanism in their approach to nation building. This approach has a strong leftist bent. The key officers have Burman advisers who advocate Chinese Communist methods of modernization, and the majority of the state scholars sent abroad pursue scientific disciplines in socialist countries. Courses in Marxism and the Burmese Socialist Program Party have replaced political science in the university curriculum.

The stated objectives of the revolutionary movement are to reform the economy from semiprivate to socialist, to eliminate foreign influence from all aspects of national life, to change the values and attitudes of the people so that new leaders will develop to carry on the revolution, to preserve national unity and to guarantee freedom of religion.

The Burmese Socialist Program Party was created as the organ for radically altering the values and attitudes of the people. Its 20 members belong to the Revolutionary Council or are close associates. They are the vanguard of what is to become a mass party that will eventually represent the whole country. Civilians as well as military personnel work as organizers with the more than 200,000 persons, mostly civil servants, teachers, military men and other government employees, who are candidates for membership.

In January 1963 the Revolutionary Council published a statement of party ideology entitled "The System of Correlation of Man and His Environment." It combined religious, metaphysical and social thought; the heavy emphasis on social thought was explained in Marxist terminology. The religious and metaphysical references were primarily designed to emphasize the Burmese Buddhist traditions of the country. Buddhist dogma about the wheel of rebirth, the virtue of renunciation and man's spiritual life were omitted, however.

Man's material well-being during his earthly existence, reflected in the statement, "Man matters most," was emphasized. Man's spiritual life or a wholesome morality, they stated, is only possible when the stomach is full. Even with a full stomach, however, greed, pride and self-aggrandizement would exist. Therefore, it would be necessary for the socialist state to plan the spiritual or moral life of its people.

No connection was made between man's spiritual life and his religion. The mixing of religion and politics will not be tolerated under the new regime, and religion itself will be deemphasized. Freedom of religion has been proclaimed, but the state will not be involved in its practice. Buddhism has been denied its status as a state religion, the slaughter of cows has been permitted and what the Revolutionary Council considers bogus acts of religiosity and charity have been denounced.

Sections of the document dealing with economics emphasize the importance of making the material well-being of the country the primary national goal for the immediate future. Nationalization was advocated and, in fact, became national policy three months later. Eventually all business activity came under state control and, with slight modification, remained so in 1967.

Nationalization also contributed to the accomplishment of another goal of the Revolutionary Council: elimination of all foreign influence. Most businesses were owned by foreign nationals who left the country when their activities came under government control.

ATTITUDES TOWARD GOVERNMENT

The attitudes of the people about their government are difficult to determine. Under constitutional government dissatisfaction with policy was expressed by elections, parliamentary debate, demonstrations and in the press. These methods have been discouraged by the Ne Win government. Peasant seminars provide a means for expressing discontent about agricultural policy, but there are no other channels designed for private citizens or groups to make their wishes known to policymakers.

Student feeling is the greatest unknown factor. Student protest has been repressed, and campus political activities have been curtailed. To some this represents a denial of rights; to others the depoliticizing of university life has meant the freedom to pursue their academic disciplines without being harassed by persons with outside interests. The government is aware that its students, trained to live in a modern world, realize that their society is still strongly traditional.

NATIONAL PRIDE AND SYMBOLISM

The peoples' identification with Buddhism is so great that the yellow robe of the monk is considered the most powerful political symbol in the country. Few demonstrations are without their yellow-clad monk, a strong preventive against police repression. The Ne Win government has been less restrained in dealing with monks than were the civilian leaders.

The one authentic national hero, Aung San, was a nationalist leader whose devotion to his country was reflected in the trust placed in him by the various ethnic minorities and political factions. He was assassinated on the eve of independence in 1948. Reverence for his name has achieved such proportions that accounts of his deeds resemble those of an epic hero. It is customary for state visitors to see the Martyr's Memorial and lay a wreath on his grave.

The wearing of the traditional form of dress, the *longyi* (a wrap-around skirt) is a reflection of national pride. It is the everyday garb of the people, not just something worn on national holidays.

The state seal is inscribed with the legend, "The Union of the Republic of Burma," in the scrollwork at the base. At the center, within the circular border inscribed with the motto, "The pursuit of unity is happiness and prosperity," is the map of Burma. Three heraldic cheetahs of classic Burmese design guard it; the top one is full face; one on either side face outward. Three is the auspicious number, and cheetahs and Burma enjoy astrological kinship.

The national flag is red with a canton of dark blue. In the canton a five-pointed, large, white star and five smaller stars between the points denote unity.

SECTION III. ECONOMIC

CHAPTER 18

CHARACTER AND STRUCTURE OF THE ECONOMY

Agriculture, dominated by rice production, is the basis of the country's economy and the source of livelihood for most of its population. Industrial production makes a modest but increasingly important contribution to national income. The economy as a whole is dependent on foreign trade and uses export earnings from rice, timber and minerals for imports of manufactured consumer needs and capital investment goods.

Since Burma achieved independence from the British in 1948 the stated aim of all economic policy has been to transform the colonial extractive economy, operated largely by and for the benefit of foreigners, into a socialistic economic system the sole function of which would be to increase the material well-being of the Burmese people. Because of the country's natural resource assets, little could significantly alter the basic components of the economic structure, but major changes have been made in the ownership of economic assets and the purposes to which productive activities are directed.

Progress toward a higher level of general welfare has been slow, however, for recovery from the severe economic setback suffered in World War II was thwarted by postindependence civil insurgency, and in the mid-1960's a series of sweeping nationalizations disrupted many aspects of production (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). In 1967 the government of General Ne Win was active in nearly every aspect of economic life and was trying to unite the country's people in efforts to achieve the goals of the Burmese Way to Socialism program.

A generous endowment of cultivable land and a beneficent climate have always ensured the Burmese people against undue hardship and grinding poverty. Famine is virtually unknown in the country's history. Before the advent of the British in the nineteenth century, most economic activity was carried on by independent farmers who cultivated small plots, primarily for subsistence needs. Most farming occurred in the dry zone of central

Burma, where considerable amounts of rice were produced under fairly elaborate systems of irrigation.

The rich lands of Lower Burma, including the deltas and lower valleys of the Irrawaddy and Sittang Rivers, were sparsely populated, and cultivation was confined to small clearings that could be wrested from swamp and jungle. This fertile but undeveloped area was the site of a spectacular development effort in the nineteenth century. Under British administration and direction the land was made arable by an extensive and complex system of drainage and flood control works. Experienced Burmese rice farmers migrated from the north, and with finances and supplemental labor from India the delta area was transformed into a highly commercial and productive rice basket. For many years Burma was the world's leading exporter of rice.

This growth was achieved, however, at a high cost to the structure and stability of Burmese society. Farmers, unused to the requirements of commercial production, quickly fell into debt to Indian moneylenders, Chinese traders or more affluent Burmese and mortgaged their only security, their land. Under the rigid impartiality of the British legal system, this land was forfeited for debt, and the once independent proprietor became a tenant farmer, usually paying exorbitant rents, or joined the growing mass of landless agricultural laborers.

Conditions of rural debt and land alienation were largely confined to the delta rice basket. In central Burma sparse rainfall, shallow soils and hilly terrain precluded any large expansion in the area under rice cultivation. Farmers in the dry zone remained fairly secure on their land and supplemented the monoculture of Lower Burma with peanuts and sesame (important sources of cooking oils), corn and vegetables, which were usually grown in a system of shifting cultivation.

Commerce, except for a few market bazaars dealing in produce, was dominated by Indians and Chinese. Industrial activity was confined to rice and timber milling, a few large mines producing tin, tungsten, lead, zinc and silver and a small petroleum industry. These industries were owned and operated by the British and usually employed Indian labor.

Except for rice cultivators, few of whom obtained a reasonable return for their efforts, the Burmese were largely excluded from most of the commercially significant economic activity. In many cases their nonparticipation in economic life was freely chosen, particularly in the field of industrial labor, but the fabric of traditional Burmese society nevertheless suffered considerable strain and deterioration from the impact of the colonial economic system, and rural disturbances were common in the 1930's.

During World War II the economic infrastructure—railroads, roads, irrigation and flood control systems—was heavily damaged. The only highly productive mines, the Mawchi tin and tungsten mines in Kayah State and the Bawdwin lead, zinc and silver mines in Shan State, and the Chauk oilfields in Magwe District were the objects of considerable destruction, first at the hands of the retiring British and later by the retreating Japanese. The independent government in 1948 was thus faced with both the immediate problem of recovery from wartime damage and the long-range complexities involved in restructuring the entire fabric of economic organization.

Early steps toward economic rehabilitation, especially programs of agrarian reform, were frustrated by the civil war that began soon after independence, a war which heavily drained the country's financial and human resources (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). In 1952 the government could finally turn concentrated attention to the problems of economic development.

Using a comprehensive survey prepared by a team of United States economists and engineers as basic data, the government in mid-1952 convened a conference to draw up a comprehensive development plan. An 8-year plan for 1952–60 was intended to transform the broken remnants of a colonial economy into a modern welfare state. The plan was called Pyidawtha (Happy Land).

The plan was strongly oriented toward industrialization as a goal that would, by eliminating the instabilities inherent in the country's status as an exporter of primary products, free it from dependence on any external economic or political pressures. Industrialization was also seen as a means of bringing about Pyidawtha through state ownership of economic assets.

In the first years of the Plan a steel mill, brick and tile factory, jute mill, pharmaceutical plant and textile and sugar mills were brought to various stages of completion under state ownership and control. In the mid-1950's falling export earnings attendant upon the decline in rice prices, which had been very high during the Korean war, forced the government virtually to halt further direct investment in industry.

Although agriculture has been relatively neglected in terms of capital investment, significant progress had been made in reforming the conditions of land tenure and agricultural credit. The Constitution made the state the ultimate owner of all lands, and the Land Nationalization Act of 1948 provided that the state was to resume or take possession of all lands held by nonfarmers. Although most of the Indian moneylender-absentee landlords had fled the country during the war and thus presented no obstacle to land reform, civil insurgency prevented the Land Nationalization

Act from carrying out effective land distribution among farm families.

A second act in 1953 authorized the resumption of all lands except those already held by cultivators or by religious bodies. The resumed land was redistributed by a hierarchy of land committees, which assessed an equitable holding as the amount of land that could be worked by one yoke of oxen, or approximately 10 acres. The legal maximum size of a large family holding was established at about 50 acres. The government also sought to prevent a return of the pattern of rural indebtedness to private moneylenders and the consequent land alienation, and in 1953 it established the State Agricultural Bank to provide government credit for farmers.

Faced with falling export earnings and production difficulties in the new state industries, the government drew up the Four-Year Plan in 1956, superseding the Pyidawtha Plan. It concentrated more on agriculture, transportation and communications and limited state participation in industry to the improvement of the efficiency of existing plants. Execution of a second even more cautious plan in 1960 was interrupted by the military take-over of General Ne Win in early 1962.

The new government soon made clear its dedication to achieving the socialist goals of its predecessors, but it tried to do so in a more radical fashion. It sought to galvanize the country into purposeful action and led the way with a series of sweeping nationalizations and decrees. Foreign influence and control over the economy were to be eliminated everywhere possible, and in most sectors they were to be replaced with state control, presumably ensuring that the economy would be run in accordance with socialistic principles.

Agriculture, the only major sector to escape nationalization, was the chief object of concern of the Ne Win government. The government sought to provide conditions under which production would be greatly increased and diversified, for it wanted to increase export earnings and achieve a higher level of self-sufficiency in foodstuffs and agricultural raw materials.

A series of decrees confirmed that persons not already in possession of land—persons who still worked as tenant farmers for Burmese landlords—were to be virtual owners of the land they cultivated. Tenants were to be selected by local land committees rather than by landlords; the levying or collection of rents was prohibited; and neither land nor equipment could be seized for default on debts. Agricultural extension services were expanded; tractors and fertilizers were provided, particularly in the dry, less fertile areas of Upper and central Burma. Irrigation and

land reclamation projects were initiated. A series of large mass meetings called Peasants' Seminars, gave the country's farmers a chance to air their grievances and to hear official explanations of public policy.

Despite these efforts, in 1967 agricultural production had not achieved the desired level. Overall production fell nearly 5 per cent in the 1965-66 fiscal year, and there were serious shortages of edible cooking oils. Neither jute, which was important for gunny sacks for rice, nor raw cotton for textiles were produced in sufficient quantities to permit the jute and textile mills to operate at capacity without importing raw materials.

The government's pricing policies for agricultural products have undoubtedly been an important factor in the sluggish growth of agricultural productivity. The State Agricultural Marketing Board handles all trade in rice, both for export and for the domestic market, as well as trade in other important agricultural products. Prices paid to farmers for their produce are considerably lower than those at which the produce is resold particularly in foreign markets. The difference, the income of the State Agricultural Marketing Board, provides the largest single source of government revenue. There have been many indications that a change in price policy would induce greater efforts and higher productivity.

In 1963 General Ne Win's government announced the nationalization of all large- and medium-scale industries. This included the major mines, the Burma Oil Company, cigarette factories, hardwood timber extraction and milling businesses, the cement factory and the larger fishing concerns. Many of these companies had been operated as joint ventures between the government and foreign establishments, but, in seeking to eliminate all foreign influence, the government brought them and previously established state industries under the central direction and control of the Industrial Development Corporation.

Industrial production fell considerably after nationalization. The few small firms that remained in private hands felt themselves to be operating under conditions of impending nationalization, and investment in new plants and equipment virtually ceased. The nationalized industries were thrown into a state of confusion as inexperienced government officials attempted to master the skills of industrial production and management.

The country has a substantial base for a modest level of industry. The tin and tungsten mines could be brought into more efficient production by the use of new methods, as could the lead, zinc and silver mines. A coal reserve in Kalewa possesses large amounts of subbituminous coal, and a number of iron ore deposits

have been discovered. The oil industry, which has two major refineries at Chauk and Syriam, produces nearly all of the country's requirements for petroleum products.

Manufacturing, still dominated by food and timber processing, since independence has broadened its base considerably. Additions to the food industry have been oil processing plants for rice bran oil, peanut and sesame oil and crushed oilcakes, which are exported in sizable amounts. The country was slowly approaching self-sufficiency in sugar production, and new sugar refineries were being planned in 1967.

The major gap in industrial production of consumer goods remained in textiles, despite strenuous efforts to produce good quality raw cotton and the establishment of a number of textile mills since independence. Nearly all kinds of capital goods, other than cement and the small output of the steel mill, still had to be acquired from abroad.

The greatest obstacles to increased industrial production appeared to be a lack of persons trained in management and administration and a lack of skilled labor. Nationalization of industry only added to the heavy administrative burdens already borne by the civil service, and elimination of all foreign participation deprived the country of its major source of skilled manpower. Despite considerable unemployment a shortage of skilled labor has stunted the country's industrial growth, and government-run training programs for labor appeared to be making little headway in 1967.

All commercial banks, which were predominantly British and Indian, were nationalized in 1963 and by 1967, as People's Banks, had been amalgamated on a functional basis with the central bank. The money supply had greatly expanded since the early 1960's as a result of agricultural credit programs, but, because of price controls imposed on basic consumer goods, inflation had been minimal.

It is in the field of internal commerce and foreign trade that the Ne Win government's policy has had the deepest impact on the economy. Large British trading companies had dominated foreign trade during the colonial period and still flourished after Burma attained independence. Smaller Indian trading companies handled important textile imports, and small Indian family-owned shops dominated retail trade, but some Chinese traders were also active in this field.

Only in the activities of the State Agricultural Marketing Board, which exported rice and other agricultural products, and the State Timber Board, which had a monopoly on the export of teak, did the Burmese people, through their government's agencies,

exert control over foreign trade. Early attempts to reserve a portion of import licenses for Burmese-owned companies had resulted in the licenses being sold to the large foreign trading houses.

In 1964 all trade—domestic and foreign, wholesale and retail, foreign- and Burmese-owned—was nationalized. The People's Stores Corporation, replaced in 1965 by the Trade Council, was to run all retail trade in a series of government shops throughout the country. The Export Agency, Burma, was established in 1964 to handle government-to-government exports not already under the aegis of the State Agricultural Marketing Board or the State Timber Board. The Myanma Export-Import Agency managed all private foreign transactions, particularly imports.

The consequence of this radical and precipitate action was seriously to disrupt domestic trade, nearly to the point of paralysis. Thousands of Indian traders left the country and were replaced by inexperienced civil servants. Even trade that was ordinarily in Burmese hands was not exempt from nationalization, and the traditional market and bazaar trade was also affected. Severe fines and punishments were imposed on persons who were detected in private buying and selling transactions.

Chronic shortages and widespread blackmarketing eventually forced the government to relax the stringency of its controls, and by 1967 a number of essential consumer items were permitted to revert to private traders. Trade in rice continued to be the monopoly of the State Agricultural Marketing Board, and price controls, both to the farmer and the consumer, were strictly maintained.

Foreign trade appears to have fared considerably better under government control than did domestic commerce. The government gave high priority to ensuring the continued flow of exports and imports, for in the mid-1960's Burma was still dependent on foreign trade.

Rice was the most important export and accounted for nearly three-fourths of export earnings; India, Ceylon, Japan, Indonesia and Communist China were the leading markets. Exports of teak, hardwoods and metal ores were still far below prewar levels, but such agricultural products as oilcakes, corn, potatoes and short-staple cotton had become quite important.

The country usually enjoys a surplus balance on merchandise trade. Imports were concentrated on textiles, prepared foods, simple manufacturers, heavy transport equipment and capital goods. Imports were from Japan, which had largely displaced Great Britain and India as major suppliers, and Communist China. The United Kingdom was still an important supplier of machinery, and the United States since 1964 had become an im-

portant source of imports. The surplus on merchandise trade was offset, however, by deficit balances in services and capital movements. In 1966 the country was forced to draw extensively on its foreign exchange reserves to meet its international obligations.

Government finance was dependent on external trade, inasmuch as a large percentage of revenue for the State Budget, which included central government finances as well as those of all nationalized agencies, came from the export earnings of the State Agricultural Marketing Board. Fiscal dependence on this source of revenue had been increased since 1962, when the government sought to limit strictly its dependence on foreign economic assistance. Until that time transfer payments to Burma from a number of foreign governments and long-term loans had enabled the country to achieve an overall surplus on its balance of payments.

Foreign aid initially had come exclusively from the West, primarily the United States. In 1953, however, dissatisfaction with the administration of the United States aid program, dislike of political conditions allegedly attached to this assistance and disruption of traditional Burmese rice markets by American food surplus disposal programs in Asian countries caused the country to cancel the aid program. The Communist countries' policies toward Asia shifted significantly in the mid-1950's, and a number of trade agreements were concluded with the Soviet Union, Eastern European countries and Communist China. China also extended a large credit in 1961 (see ch. 15, Foreign Relations). In its quest for a greater degree of independence from foreign influence and to safeguard its neutralist foreign policy the Ne Win government in 1967 had concluded no new aid agreements; it preferred to rely on export earnings for foreign exchange. A number of Communist Chinese and United States development projects were still being carried out, however, with funds remaining from previous agreements.

CHAPTER 19

AGRICULTURE

The great majority of the population derives its livelihood from agriculture and related activities, and agricultural products account for more than 80 percent of foreign exchange earnings. Official statistics place agriculture's contribution to gross domestic product at between one-fourth and one-third, but the real value of the total agricultural output is probably understated.

Rice is the keystone of agricultural production. In 1966 the country was the world's sixth largest producer of rice, and the third largest exporter. Other crops important in both domestic consumption and in the export trade are peas, beans, cotton, peanuts, sesame and potatoes. Animals are important as a source of power and transport, but the Buddhist beliefs of most Burmese have prevented the systematic raising of livestock for food purposes. Fish, however, constitute an important element in the Burmese diet, although commercial fishing of the inland and coastal waters is still in early stages of development. The country's excellent teak and hardwood forests should be significant sources of foreign exchange when processing and transportation facilities are more fully developed.

Upon attaining independence in 1948 the country faced serious problems in its agriculture. Productivity, crippled during World War II by destruction of drainage and irrigation systems, jungle encroachment, decimated livestock and disrupted transport and marketing facilities, had to be restored. All of these problems were exacerbated by the onset of civil disturbances in the early 1950's.

The government's efforts to rehabilitate and develop agriculture during the early years of independence was largely limited to nationalization and redistribution of land; its preoccupation with industrial development resulted in the relative neglect of other agricultural needs (see ch. 18, Character and Structure of the Economy). After assuming control in 1962 the Ne Win government carried on or initiated projects covering most aspects of agricultural production and in 1967 was giving first priority to agriculture in its economic development programs.

Major actions included land tenure legislation that gave farmers virtually inalienable security of tenure. Neither land nor equip-

ment could be taken for debt. Government financing was provided in an effort to eliminate private moneylenders and spur production. Extensive programs of land reclamation, soil conservation, flood control and irrigation were maintained. Tractors, fertilizers and improved seeds were made available, and agricultural extension work was directed to diversifying the range of agricultural production.

The Ne Win government maintained a monopoly in the marketing of virtually all agricultural commodities, but, because of bottlenecks in distribution and the adverse effect of pricing policies on production, the government's trade controls were relaxed, or removed in some cases, late in 1966. Rice trade, however, remained in the hands of the State Agricultural Marketing Board, which handled both internal distribution and export trade.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND THEIR USE

The country is well endowed with land resources, and a high proportion of the land has agricultural value. Of the 162 million acres which comprise the total land surface, 58 million acres, or 36 percent, can be cultivated, 34 million acres, or 21 percent, is suitable for grazing, and the remaining 70 million acres, 43 percent, is forest land, at least half of it containing commercially valuable timber.

There are two major agricultural areas. The most productive, where more than three-quarters of the country's rice is produced, is in the lower valleys of the Irrawaddy and Sittang Rivers and their deltas. This part of Lower Burma, often referred to as the central basin, contains deep fertile alluvial soils and has an annual rainfall of 80 to 130 inches. It covers the districts of Rangoon, Pegu, Tharawaddy, Hanthawaddy, Insein, Bassein, Henzada, Myaungmya, Ma-ubin and Pyapon. Small coastal pockets and narrow alluvial valleys of the larger rivers in the Arakan and Tenasserim divisions, where rainfall averages about 200 inches annually, are other important places of rice production.

The second major agricultural region is that of the plateaus and hills surrounding the central basin in a semicircle to the west, north and east. It includes the Pegu and Arakan Yomas and the Shan Plateau. Soils are generally shallow, easily exhaustible and subject to erosion. Cultivation occurs in shallow undulating valleys between hills and ridges. This area is often referred to as the dry zone, since it receives only 25 to 40 inches annually.

The region of Kyaukse, Shwebo and the Ye-U Canal, by virtue of extensive irrigation dating back for centuries, normally produces a rice surplus. North of Thayetmyo, in an area covering Magwe, Mingu, Meiktila, Yamethin, Myingyan, Pakokku, Lower

Chindwin and Sagaing Districts, rice is also produced under irrigation, but, in general, this area is one of rice deficit. It is, however, self-sufficient in most food crops other than rice.

In many parts of the dry zone, double-cropping is made possible by the rainfall pattern resulting from the country's monsoon climate (see ch. 2, Physical Environment). Rainfall peaks in May and June in September and October enable farmers to produce a second crop of some vegetables after the rice harvest. Approximately 1 million acres were double-cropped in 1956, and efforts were being made to extend this type of cultivation.

The most important forest land is in the Shan Plateau, the Pegu Yoma and in the northern part of the country.

During the mid-1960's farming had not begun to reach the limits to which the country's resources could be exploited. Information published in early 1967 indicated that there were about 42 million acres of available arable land, of which nearly 22 million acres were under cultivation. These figures apparently refer only to available land, thus discounting land that is potentially cultivable but might be severely eroded, in need of irrigation and drainage and flood control improvements, or overgrown by jungle.

Effective use of land resources is impaired by periodic floods in Lower Burma and by insufficient water supply and soil erosion in the dry zone. There is also a need to reclaim land that could not be kept under cultivation during the troubled decade of World War II and postindependence insurgency and, as a result, was invaded by jungle.

In Lower Burma, especially in Pegu and Toungoo Districts and on the Arakan and Tenasserim coasts, flooding is a serious problem during the heavy rains in July and August. Approximately 5 million acres are subject to severe flooding, and 8 million acres experience moderate inundation. In 1964 agricultural production was seriously affected by heavy floods, and in some areas 5 to 10 percent of the annual crop is lost to water damage. Government attempts to control water include 4,000 acres to be reclaimed from inundation by a dam in the Wakema township in Irrawaddy Division. Another dam in Meiktila will make 18,000 acres available. A project in the Sittang Valley is designed to protect 200,000 acres from flooding.

In the dry zone, attention is focused on obtaining adequate water supplies and irrigation facilities. Although total irrigated acreage in the early 1960's stood at about 1.3 million, one source estimated that 9 million acres could be improved by irrigation, primarily in the dry zone. Water is supplied for irrigation by either canals from rivers or by storage tanks. In 1964 there were 891,000 canal-irrigated areas, two-thirds of which were under

government control. There were 64,000 acres irrigated from tanks and 10,000 from wells. Of the total irrigated acreage, rice accounted for 1.1 million acres, and corn, millet, sugarcane, wheat and cotton were produced on the remainder.

In addition to land that will be irrigated under flood-control programs, 100,000 acres were to be irrigated from a reservoir in the Prome District, 6,000 acres in Kayah State were to be irrigated and 28,000 in the Shwenyaung valley. With assistance from the Soviet Union, a dam at Kyetmauktaung was to bring 43,000 acres in the Myingyan District under irrigation. By early 1966 the government had financed 2,818 small water projects in the dry zone.

Soil erosion is a serious problem in the dry zone, particularly in those areas where shifting cultivation is common practice. Torrential rains are particularly damaging to shallow soil which has been deprived of natural coverage. The land survey of 1956 estimated that only 17 percent of the country's total acreage was not subject to erosion. Erosion is particularly severe in Sagaing and Mandalay Divisions, in the Chin Special Division, and in the Shan, Kayah and Kachin States, particularly in hilly areas. The upland ridges of Arakan and Tenasserim Divisions also suffer from severe erosion.

LAND TENURE

In the traditional Burmese system, title to all land rested with the king. Farmers could be said to possess the land, inasmuch as they and their heirs were left in full control of it so long as they cultivated it, but they did not own it wholly because the land could not be sold. A farmer could mortgage his usufructuary rights, but he and his heirs always maintained the right to regain full possession by repayment of the original amount of the mortgage. Land was not a freely marketable commodity, because sale in any sense was always conditioned by its redeemability.

This traditional system affected primarily the Central Belt of Upper Burma where the land was suitable for intensive cultivation and supported a relatively dense population. It did not apply in the mountainous areas farther north which were sparsely inhabited by non-Burman tribal groups; nor did it have much impact on Lower Burma, which consisted largely of uncultivated swamp and jungle supporting only a scattered population (see ch. 2, Physical Environment).

When Lower Burma came under the rule of the British in the mid-nineteenth century, they saw it as having great agricultural potential. After the completion of the Suez Canal had opened

important new European markets, British policy was bent on capitalizing on this potential for agricultural exports. In the empty lands of Lower Burma the colonial government developed one of the world's great rice-producing areas, utilizing the experience of rice cultivators immigrating from Upper Burma, the labor of Indian immigrants and the financial resources of the Chettyar moneylenders from southern India (see ch. 5, Ethnic Groups and Languages).

Under British administration, cultivators in the south could come into full legal title to newly opened land by paying taxes on it for a specified number of years, but in practice this rarely occurred. The heavy level of indebtedness that farmers almost inevitably incurred usually resulted in forfeiture of their land. This was possible because the British imposed their legal system in which mortgages were regarded as negotiable and transferable rather than perpetually redeemable. Land thus became a marketable commodity.

Most of the farmers who came down from the less fertile lands of Upper Burma were expert rice cultivators, but they were not accustomed to producing for the commercial market and did not understand the financial requirements of such production. Unused to handling money, frequently unaware of the need to set aside part of their income for financing the upcoming crop until the harvest, they often could not meet current expenses and had to borrow. Rates of interest were very high in view of the small profit margin that an individual farmer could expect from his crop, even in a good year. Chettyar charges ranged from 15 to 36 percent, and interest rates charged by Chinese and a few middle-class Burmese were often considerably higher. Farmers also became indebted to Indian and Chinese traders.

The colonial administration followed laissez faire economic policies. Loans secured by mortgages could be protected in British colonial courts. The result was that cultivators rarely could maintain themselves free from debt long enough to acquire title and in many cases left their land and moved on to clear new land in the hope of a fresh start. Thus, mounting rural debt served to further the expansion of the area under cultivation.

As the physical limits of agricultural expansion were reached in Lower Burma, cultivators, with no new land to clear, became tenant farmers. By the 1930's nearly half of the land in Lower Burma was owned by noncultivators who rented land at exorbitant rates. Two-thirds of this land was held by Chettyars. The Burmese farmers were caught in a trap of debt that apparently afforded no escape. By 1939 nearly 60 percent of the land in Lower Burma was cultivated by tenant farmers, and in the principal rice-

growing districts the proportion of absentee landlordism was higher. The relatively unproductive agricultural conditions of Upper Burma prevented its being subject to the same process of extensive cultivation, debt and land alienation.

After World War II, as the country moved toward independence, the government enacted laws giving tenants fixity of tenure and obliterating prewar debts. Many Chettyar landlords had fled the country during the war, and no other landlord groups offered any significant opposition to these measures.

The Constitution of independent Burma makes the state the ultimate owner of all lands and empowers the government to regulate, alter or abolish land tenures or resume possession of any land and distribute it. In 1948 the government passed the Land Nationalization Act, hoping to institute a radical settlement of the land problem. According to the then Minister of Agriculture, the main provision of the act was to "resume all lands held by non-agriculturalists," with the exception of rubber and palm land and land held by religious bodies. No provisions were made for compensation. Holdings were limited to 50 acres per farming family.

The advent of civil war prevented any effective carrying out of the act, but in 1953 a second Land Nationalization Act spelled out land policy in more specific terms and provided supervisory and administrative machinery to eliminate the political maneuvering that had characterized the initial implementation of the 1948 act. The 1953 act authorized the resumption of all lands except those that qualified for exemption. Exemptions were granted to land held for religious purposes, to "agriculturalist families" and to any "non-agriculturalist family," the head of which would undertake to reside permanently on the land and to cultivate it himself.

Farming families were limited to 50 acres, but an additional 12.5 acres were allowed for every member of the family over a total of four adults. Resumed land was to be distributed to farming families by a hierarchy of land committees. A Central Land Committee and District Committees supervised the work of locally elected Village Land Committees and could receive appeals from their judgments.

Priority in distribution was to be given tenant farmers and families owning less than what was considered to be a holding of equitable size—the amount of land that one yoke of oxen could work, or approximately 10 acres. Second priority was to be given those whose holdings were less than the optimum for which they would be entitled to claim exemption, such as a large family which might own 10 acres but considerably less than they could legally claim. Finally, landless farm laborers and other village residents, such as artisans, were to be allotted land.

As in pre-British Burma, the country's farmers in the mid-1960's had no complete title to the land they held. Formal title still rested with the state. The land had been given to the farmer without cost, and he could divide, transfer or sell it, but only to persons who undertook to reside in the nearby village. This provision was aimed at preventing the reemergence of absentee landlordism.

In practice, the process of nationalization worked to confirm the pattern of landholding in effect after World War II, since with the departure of prewar large landholders a few persons owned or were tenants on more than the legal maximum of land. A few persons who had not held land under any form were given land under the 1953 act, but these represented less than 5 percent of the farming population.

The land nationalization acts, according to the Constitution, had been applicable only to Burma proper, since the central government was not empowered to legislate on land matters for the states. Since the prewar conditions of absentee landlordism, concentration of ownership and heavy indebtedness had prevailed most acutely in Lower Burma, there was little need for land legislation in the states, which had maintained their systems of independent proprietorship in reasonably good condition.

Whether or not these legal restrictions on landholding had been fully enforced since the virtual abrogation of constitutional government by General Ne Win in 1962 was uncertain in early 1967, but the government's announced dedication to Burmese socialism made it probable that they had been. In related matters the government was active in handling problems of tenancy and agricultural credit. In 1963 a Tenancy Act decreed that tenants be selected by local land committees instead of landlords, and a second Law to Protect the Rights of Peasants prohibited the seizure of both land and farm equipment for default on loans. In 1965 an amendment to the 1963 Tenancy Act prohibited the levying or collection of rent. The effect of these acts has been to confirm tenants as virtual owners of the land they work.

The problem of rural indebtedness has continued to be difficult. Prewar debts had been totally written off, but the departure of the Chettyar moneylenders left a real gap in the system. In 1953 the government created the State Agricultural Bank, which channeled its funds through village banks and cooperative societies. The level of loans disbursed rose from K5.3 million (K4.76 equals US\$1) in 1953-54 to K244 million in 1961-62. Loans were made on a basis of sown acreage, and additional funds were made available at harvesttime. The level of repayment was high in the early years of the bank's operations, but in the late 1950's a high

percentage of default from cooperative societies resulted in a shift of emphasis from cooperatives almost exclusively to village banks (see ch. 24, Financial and Monetary System).

The Ne Win government more than doubled the funds available for agricultural credit when it nationalized the banks in 1962. K700 million was made available in 1962–63, compared to an allotment of K300 million in the previous years.

PRACTICES AND PRODUCTION

Most farms are slightly smaller than the size stipulated by the various land and tenancy acts as optimum for a single family—10 acres, the amount of land that can be worked by one team of draft animals. A survey made in the mid-1960's indicated that 40 percent of the farms were less than 5 acres in size and only 14 percent were more than 20 acres. Except for land owned by Buddhist monasteries and a few rubber and palm plantations on the coast (all exempt from land nationalization and redistribution), there are virtually no large landholdings.

Cultivation patterns fall into three classes determined by topography, soil and rainfall. *Le* cultivation consists of growing rice on flat fields that are periodically inundated by rainfall and the overflow of rivers. This type of cultivation is concentrated in the lower valleys of the Irrawaddy and Sittang Rivers and the Delta area, in Akyab District and on the coasts of Arakan and Tenasserim Divisions. In addition to the rice crop, *le* farmers have vegetable gardens and fruit trees, but for commercial purposes *le* cultivation is monocultural, for no important second crops are grown after the rice is harvested. The major form of animal power is the water buffalo. In the early 1960's Japanese experts were in the country demonstrating the techniques of more intensive rice cultivation and studying the feasibility of introducing more mechanized practices.

A similar type of cultivation, *kaing* cultivation, occurs along the overflow of lesser rivers and streams, primarily in the central part of the country north of the delta areas. Rice is produced to some extent, but *kaing* land has been found to be particularly suited to the production of tobacco. Because *kaing* land is well watered but not subject to erosion, it is frequently double cropped, with beans and peas being grown in the cooler dry season of central Burma.

Ye, or shifting cultivation in dry areas, covers most of the rest of the country. In the uplands of central Burma, double-cropping is often practiced when the amount of rainfall of the two rainy seasons permits. Oxen are the major source of power, but the government has made a serious effort to introduce tractor cultivation, particularly in the sparsely populated Shan State.

The reasons for low productivity per acre are disputed. The government has made significant efforts to make tractors and fertilizers available where these are relevant to increasing production and has increased agricultural extension services and rural credit facilities.

A feature of the Ne Win government's agricultural development activity has been the convocation of Peasant Seminars several times a year in various parts of the country. Among the points elicited in recent seminars have been complaints that water resources in the dry zone are inadequate, that there is not enough demonstration of terraced cultivation and that tractor drivers who are supposed to plow for all cultivators in a cooperative arrangement frequently ignore the poorer farmers. Many simple implements, such as hoes, reportedly were in short supply, and fertilizer prices were said to be so high that a farmer, given the prevailing prices for produce, could not meet production costs if he used fertilizer.

Illiteracy has been cited by government officials as a major stumbling block to increased agricultural productivity. Many farmers cannot read pamphlets and instructions, and the shortage of extension workers limits the scope of practical demonstrations. In the 1966 Peasant Seminar there was a demand for increased agricultural education services and suggestions that agriculture and forestry be made compulsory subjects in primary schools.

One of the important factors cited in inhibiting increased productivity was the low prices paid by the government marketing monopoly, particularly for rice. In late 1966 the government indicated that adjustments would be made (see ch. 22, Domestic Trade). Furthermore, the disruption of general retailing attendant upon the nationalization of wholesale and retail trade in 1963 caused a shortage of consumer goods in many rural areas, thus depriving farmers of immediate incentives to increase production.

The major aim of government production policy is to diversify agricultural output and increase production of those commodities which are in chief demand, either domestically or in foreign markets. Crops that are in great demand for domestic consumption include cotton, edible oils, sugar, tobacco, tea and coffee. Experiments in producing barley, oats, ramie, castor beans and cocoa were to have been started in the early 1960's but production was not important by 1967.

Rice

Of about 15 million acres suitable for rice production, nearly a third is in the delta area, somewhat less than a third in the Arakan and Tenasserim Divisions. About one-fifth is in the area north of the Delta, including Toungoo, Prome and Yamethin

Districts. The balance is in drier regions, such as the Chin Special Division, Shan, Kayah and Kachin States. Acreage actually devoted to rice was about 12 million in the 1930's but fell during World War II to less than 9 million acres. In 1966 nearly 13 million acres were under rice cultivation (see table 7). The proportion of total cultivated area devoted to rice has remained fairly steady at approximately 65 percent since the 1930's.

Table 7. Agricultural Production in Burma, 1962-63 to 1966-67

	(in thousands)									
	1962-63		1963-64		1964-65		¹ 1965-66		¹ 1966-67	
	Acres	Tons	Acres	Tons	Acres	Tons	Acres	Tons	Acres	Tons
Rice -----	11,953	² 7,544	12,475	7,660	12,624	8,373	12,890	7,928	12,696	7,969
Wheat -----	162	32	218	53	298	71	409	95	371	108
Peanuts -----	1,536	425	1,490	332	1,332	338	1,315	283	1,436	403
Sesame seed -----	1,576	84	1,610	53	1,960	99	1,998	57	1,944	91
Cotton -----	551	54	674	53	616	67	567	45	662	87
Jute -----	53	11	54	12	53	12	72	15	71	15
Beans and peas -----	1,710	317	1,854	339	1,609	275	1,707	274	1,676	338
Sugarcane -----	117	1,272	98	1,097	120	1,067	143	1,425	133	1,964
Tobacco, Virginia -----	6	13	9	13	13	17	17	23	17	24
Tobacco, Burmese -----	118	45	133	41	116	40	101	29	128	47
Rubber -----	184	14	207	13	213	14	216	12	221	12
Corn -----	350	65	357	72	221	53	207	47	244	61
Peppers -----	134	23	134	18	144	20	154	17	173	25
Onions -----	53	95	39	78	45	83	46	50	48	88
Potatoes -----	55	62	41	49	37	45	37	34	40	49

¹ Provisional estimates.

² Unmilled rice.

Source: Adapted from *Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook*, 1967, p. 130.

Rice cultivation follows a definite cycle based on the advent of monsoon rains. About late March the dry stubble remaining in the fields from the previous harvest may be burned over. Much land is so naturally fertile that farmers see no advantage in making the rather expensive investment in fertilizer that may increase the yield by as much as a third. Burning over the fields and the application of fertilizer may be delayed until the New Year festival (Thingyan) is over. This usually begins about April 13 and continues for several days.

When the rains become substantial and quite steady, about the end of June, the fields are plowed by animal-drawn equipment. The seed is germinated by soaking in a wooden cask, covered with straw and cow dung and then pricked out in a seedbed. When the young plants have grown sufficiently they are pulled up and transplanted by hand into the soft mud of the fields. This labor generally involves the entire family. After the transplanting it is only necessary to block off the water channels, build up the embankments between fields and keep the fields weeded. Until the harvest in December the farmer needs only to ensure that the water level in the fields is sufficient and evenly distributed.

The average yield per acre is from 1,300 to 1,500 pounds of paddy, or unhusked rice. Weight loss in milling may amount to as

much as 25 percent. In the dry zone rice yields may be frequently so poor that the subsistence needs of an individual farmer must be supplemented with corn or millet.

In late 1966 the government attempted to stimulate production by announcing higher payments for sales of unhusked rice delivered to mills before January 15 of the following year. Prices were raised generally, but higher prices were paid for early deliveries because export prices are higher early after the harvesting of the new crop.

Other Cereals, Peas and Beans

Wheat and corn are the major cereals other than rice, although millet is often produced in dry areas. The major wheat-producing areas are in Shwebo, Sagaing, lower Chindwin, Minbu and Kyaukse Districts. These areas produce hard wheat, but a large area in the Shan State produces soft wheat, and much virgin land in that state could, given the mechanized production necessary in so sparsely populated an area, become quite productive. Yields vary between 7 and 13 bushels per acre.

Corn, used both as food and for cheroot wrappers, has increased in acreage and production since 1963, but substantial production depends primarily on farmers becoming more aware of the value of corn as stockfeed. Corn is produced in the dry hilly regions and is particularly important in Shan State.

Beans, peas and sorghum are important crops in the northern dry zone and may be planted as a second crop in central Burma and in Prome, Henzada, Tharawaddy Districts after the rice has been harvested and stream levels have fallen. Beans and peas, generally sown in October and November and harvested in February and March, are important exports. They are the major crops figuring in systems of land improvement by crop rotation.

Fibers and Oilseeds

Cotton is the most important fiber, but the country is far from self-sufficient and must import most of its textile needs. The most important variety, Wagale, produces a short, coarse fiber that is unsuitable for spinning. Most cotton lint is exported to be blended with other varieties. The cottonseed is important domestically for fuel, oilcake and oil, which is used locally in soapmaking. Other varieties, named Mahlaing after the government-operated experiment station, are longer staple but in 1967 were not produced in sufficient quantities to help meet the country's needs.

Cotton production is centered in the dry zone, where the drought-resistant Wagale and Mahlaing varieties thrive on poor soil with 25 to 30 inches of annual rainfall. The crop is planted

in May before the rains and picked in September. It may be rotated with sesame and beans. Yields average 300 pounds of lint per acre. The major problem in improving and increasing cotton production has been in improving the quality of fibers and in producing enough seed for distribution to cultivators.

Because sacks for rice have to be imported, a program of jute production was begun in 1952. A target of 150,000 acres under cultivation by 1955 was not reached, however, and only about half the planned area was under cultivation in 1966. Difficulties in increasing production have included a lack of a trained staff with knowledge of the crop's requirements, planting on unsuitable land, unsatisfactory supplies of seeds and a lack of fertilizer. Proposals to grow sisal and ramie do not appear to have been followed up in any significant manner.

Oilseeds are an important crop because Burmese cooking requires large amounts of edible oils. Sesame oil is the most popular with Burmese, and, since the crop will thrive on many types of soil, requires little attention, costs little to produce and has a short growing season, it is produced extensively, particularly in Upper Burma. The crop is sown in September and reaped in January and often is rotated with millet and peanuts. Yields, averaging 30 pounds of oil per acre, are so low that increases in the area under sesame cultivation are not planned and peanut oil is scheduled to be the most important source of edible oil in the future. More than half of the peanut crop is produced in Magwe, Pakokku and Myingyan Districts. The development of peanuts as the major crop in dry-zone areas has resulted in serious soil erosion. Frequently the planting is not along contours, and the variety grown is a type which requires the entire rainy season to mature. When the crop is harvested at the beginning of dry weather, the soil is left loose and unprotected for 6 months. Wind erosion occurs, and large amounts of topsoil are lost when the rains recur.

Increased production is planned in the Shan, Kachin and Kayah States, where there is an abundance of good land level enough to bear the crop without serious erosion. Much of the increased irrigated acreage in Upper Burma is also to be devoted to peanuts, and large areas of Lower Burma are considered to be suitable for second crop production after the rice harvest. Peanut yields in the late 1950's were about 600 pounds per acre, but agricultural experts hoped to increase this to 1,000 pounds.

Other Crops

Tea is raised in the northern part of Shan State and near Manhshan and Toungoo. Production did not meet domestic needs during the mid-1960's, however, and the government planned to

increase the area planted to tea by 40,000 acres in Shan State. A major obstacle to increased production is a shortage of labor. The government sponsors a large-scale movement of laborers every year into Shan State, where temporary camps are organized for tea pickers.

Vegetables and fruits in great variety are grown in almost all parts of the country. Potatoes are important in Shan State, where they are raised in rotation with dry rice and peanuts. Tomatoes, mustard, radishes, onions and peppers are produced by nearly every family for home consumption, and onions and peppers are frequently raised as commercial crops. The most important fruits are mangoes, bananas, pineapples and citrus. A number of spices and herbs used in cooking and medicine are raised easily in the country, and with increased production and efficient marketing many of them could be profitably exported.

LIVESTOCK

Animals are important for draft, transport and as a source of fertilizer. The Buddhist beliefs of the majority of the population hinder the breeding and raising of animals for human consumption. In 1956 it was estimated that in Burma proper, excluding the states, there were 4.6 million cattle, 760,000 buffalo, 13,000 horses, 750 mules, 400,000 swine, 30,000 sheep and 200,000 goats, in addition to an undetermined number of chickens and ducks.

Cattle are maintained primarily as work animals and are in extensive use in the drier parts of the country. In 1965 official statistics indicated that there was one head of cattle for plowing for every 5 acres of cultivated land. Thus, there was no general shortage, since a team of two oxen was theoretically available for each 10-acre farm, the size of most units. Water buffalo are the preferred draft animals in Lower Burma, since they are better adapted to plowing the inundated paddy fields.

Small horses and ponies are used for transport. Mules are useful in the hilly regions of Shan State and have been used frequently for army transport, but a scarcity of sires has severely curtailed the number of mules available. Sheep and goats are kept in limited number in the dry areas but do not appear to be important sources of milk, meat or fiber.

The major problem of animal husbandry is the lack of feed and water during the long dry season. Animals may be native Burmese stock or of Indian origin, but interbreeding has come close to eliminating the Burmese animals as a pure line. Burmese beasts are small but extremely hardy and can maintain their strength with a minimum of food and care. Given proper feeding

the quality of draft animals easily could be improved. Selective breeding is rare and is made virtually impossible because of an almost total lack of fencing.

Some progress has been made in government programs to improve standards of animal husbandry. Breeding stations have been established, and a veterinary college and research station is maintained at Insein. Demonstration centers and veterinary extension officers are posted throughout the country, but they are few in number.

FISHING AND LUMBERING

Despite the country's long seacoast and well stocked rivers, large imports of fish were required during the mid-1960's. Most of the fishing is in inland waterways and ponds—usually for immediate family consumption. Many species of fish in the country are responsive to pond culture, and the government has tried to develop both pond fishing and stocking of flooded paddy fields.

Coastal fishing is still in the early stages of development. During World War II the Japanese carried on deep sea fishing from Rangoon and were able to supply large quantities of fish to the Japanese army and to the Rangoon market. Since independence commercial exploitation of coastal waters has been carried on by the Martaban Fishing Company, organized in 1953 with Japanese and Burmese private capital. The company was nationalized in the early 1960's, but was still receiving technical and financial assistance from the Japanese in 1966. It maintains a seagoing fishing fleet that operates the year round. A cannery was to be built in Rangoon with Japanese assistance.

Long the world's foremost exporter of teak, the country has had continual difficulty since independence in effective exploitation of its forest resources. Forests cover almost half of the total land area, and there are many areas which, while not classified as forests, contain trees and bamboo grouped in and around villages and farms. About 50 different forest species are now commercially utilized, of which teak is by far the most important, both in quantity available and potential sales value. There are some 250 other species said to be saleable.

The country's timber resources were nationalized in 1963, and the State Timber Board assumed a monopoly on logging, milling and exporting of teak and other hardwoods. Specific areas are classified as reserves, such as part of the Pegu Yoma, the mountains ringing the central basin area and the Shan Plateau. Some areas are reserved as watersheds, where cutting is prohibited, and other areas are reserved primarily for operations by the Board.

Prewar production levels averaged 955,000 tons, of which 453,000 were teak. The war virtually halted large-scale felling of trees, and recovery has been very slow, particularly in teak. In 1966, 315,000 tons of timber, including 135,000 tons of teak, were processed in sawmills. The low level of teak production was the result of insecure conditions in the countryside. The forest areas were much more affected by the insurgency than were the major areas of cultivation. In the case of teak, an additional factor of major importance must be accounted for. Teak trees are girdled and must be allowed to stand for about 3 years before felling. This practice makes it possible to float the logs to sawmills since green teak will not float. After they are felled, it may take another 3 years for the logs to reach the mills. The insurgency interfered with normal girdling, and in 1967 there were reports of substantial theft of logs as they were being floated to the mills. Another obstacle to increased production is the need for more mechanized extraction and milling facilities and for access roads and better transport methods.

CHAPTER 20

INDUSTRY

Industrial activity, including mining, power and manufacturing, accounts for roughly 30 percent of the gross domestic product. Approximately 10 percent of the country's labor force finds employment in industry.

Natural resources are more than adequate for the development of a moderate level of industrialization. The country was nearly self-sufficient in petroleum products in the mid-1960's. Power resources were deemed adequate, although there remained a need for a wider geographical distribution of available capacity. Coal and iron deposits had not begun to be effectively exploited but were estimated to be an adequate base for a level of steel production that would serve domestic needs. The mining industry produced tin, tungsten, lead, zinc and silver for export. Copper and nickel were known to exist but were not mined in large quantities.

Manufacturing is centered in Rangoon. Long dominated by rice milling and timber processing, the composition of manufacturing has been significantly diversified since independence. Governmental emphasis on industrialization during the early years of independence resulted in the addition of a steel mill, jute mill, brick and tile factory, pharmaceutical plant, and several textile and sugar mills to the industrial structure and greatly broadened its productive base. In 1967 textile production was the major weakness in the provision of an adequate level of production of consumer goods.

Government policy toward industry has undergone a number of shifts in emphasis since independence. Early policy included state establishment of heavier industries under joint venture agreements with foreign firms. Foreign private investment was encouraged with investment guarantees, a liberal policy on licensing imports of industrial raw materials and tariff protection for new enterprises. Production difficulties in the state enterprise in the late 1950's, however, caused the government to feel that it had overextended itself, and a policy of retrenchment and consolidation followed in which responsibility for new investment was directed to private foreign and domestic capital.

This policy was reversed under the second Ne Win government, which came to power in early 1962. In pursuing the Burmese

Way to Socialism the government deemed it necessary to oust all foreign influence and to assume direct control of virtually all industrial production. Industrial activity was to be subordinated to the requirements of increased agricultural production (see ch. 18, Character and Structure of the Economy).

The oil and mining industries were the largest concerns to be nationalized and added to the previously existing state enterprises—steel, jute, textiles, sugar refining and drugs. Some smaller consumer industries, such as a breweries and cigarette factories, were also taken over. In 1967 about two-thirds of the industrial structure had been nationalized. Primarily as a result of the confusions and uncertainties engendered by the government's action, industrial production declined significantly after 1963, but it was expected to recover ultimately.

RESOURCES

Labor and Management

The country has always lacked an adequate indigenous force of industrial technicians and skilled laborers. It was not this lack, however, but a great shortage of experienced administrators in government that was the principal impediment to industrial development during the early years of independence. Relying on a combination of state enterprise and private foreign investment, the first industrialization programs were carried out largely with foreign technicians and labor, but the programs put a heavy burden on civil service called upon not only to administer the ordinary affairs of the new government but to assume responsibility for carrying out its socialist economic goals as well. The greatest need was for more high-level Burmese personnel who could effectively coordinate and administer the government's industrial policies (see ch. 13, The Governmental System).

In 1963, when the second Ne Win government decided to eliminate foreign influence from the economy and to assume direct control of all industry, the country was thereby deprived of critically needed technicians, engineers and skilled laborers, thus exacerbating the strain that government administrative and managerial shortcomings had produced in industry. Although the country was making progress during the mid-1960's in training skilled administrators and industrial workers, it may be some time before there are enough well-trained personnel to ensure efficient functioning of the country's industrial establishment (see ch. 4, Population and Labor Force; ch. 21, Labor Relations and Organization).

Minerals

Burma is considered to be rich in mineral resources. Only 30 percent of the country had been geologically surveyed and mapped by 1966, and there was reason to believe that future surveys would yield additional discoveries. A report published by the government's Mineral Resources Development Corporation in 1966 stated that reserves of copper, iron, coal and nickel valued at more than K9 billion (K4.76 equal US\$1) had been discovered.

The most promising resources were in coal, iron, lead, zinc, silver, copper and nickel. The Krupp interests of West Germany, under contract to the Burmese Government, had surveyed the country for coal and iron. It reported that the deposit at Kalewa contained 128 million tons of lignite coal and that a 66 million-ton deposit of iron existed at Pangpet as well as lesser deposits of iron near Taunggyi, Maymyo and Margui.

According to a survey published by a team of United Nations experts in 1966, the lead, zinc and silver ores of the Bawdwin mine in Shan State could continue production for 20 years. New techniques of extraction and smelting could permit effective utilization of low-grade multimetal ores that existed in large quantities. Copper reserves of 5.5 million tons were also discovered by the Mineral Resources Development Corporation survey as well as rich seams of nickel speiss in Chin Special Division.

The country possessed tin and tungsten ore reserves of 300,000 tons. The Mawchi Mine in Kayah State was one of the largest tin producers in the world, and reserves at a number of lesser mines in Tenasserim Division were estimated to be approximately equal to the Mawchi Mine's potential.

An intensive program of oil exploration, aided by a team of Rumanian oil experts, was under way in the mid-1960's. Surveys were being concentrated in the Irrawaddy Delta area and offshore along the coast of Arakan Division. The government expected additional oil to be found in the Shwebo area. The country's known reserves in the mid-1960's stood at approximately 280 million tons, and there was abundant natural gas in the Chauk oilfields.

Power

The government began an ambitious program of power development in the early 1950's. Before independence electric power had consisted of coal or diesel thermal generators in the major towns, administered by independent municipal companies. There was no national power transmission system. In 1951 installed capacity was about 30,000 kilowatts; production, 52.5 million kilowatt-hours; and consumption, 41.6 million kilowatt-hours.

The government nationalized the various municipal units and brought all aspects of electric power under the control of the Electricity Supply Board in 1953. In 1954 it launched a three-pronged policy to increase the country's supply of power. Top priority was given to the construction of a dam and hydroelectric station on the Baluchaung River, just below the Lawpita Falls in Kayah State. The second aspect of the program was the installation of diesel generating plants in 36 towns in 1956. Pending the completion of the Baluchaung projects the thermal capacity of the Rangoon generating plant was to be increased.

Built largely with funds from the Japanese reparations agreement, the Baluchaung project was completed in two stages. The first stage entailed the construction of substations in Thazi in central Burma, in Mandalay and in Kalaw, which was to serve the northern part of Shan State. The second stage entailed construction of the dam and installation of three generators at Lawpita Falls with a total capacity of 84,000 kilowatts. Power was relayed in transmission lines to Rangoon via Toungoo and Pegu and to Mandalay via Taunggyi and Meiktila. The project was substantially completed in 1957.

By 1963, 316 towns and 371 villages received electricity, and it appeared that these figures had not changed significantly by mid-1967. Nearly three-fourths of total consumption was in Rangoon. Industry consumed approximately one-third of the electricity generated in 1964–65, and the country's power resources were considered to be generally adequate, although there were plans to extend electric power to more towns and villages (see table 8).

*Table 8. Electric Power Output and Consumption in Burma, 1961–62 Through 1964–65*¹

Year	Installed Capacity ²	Units Generated ³	Units Sold ³		
			General Lighting	Industrial Power	Domestic Power and Commercial Lighting
1961–62	191,000	300.2	88.2	84.8	58.2
1962–63	—do—	359.5	118.2	87.7	66.4
1963–64	—do—	357.2	115.3	83.5	63.2
1964–65	—do—	387.7	131.9	91.8	82.5

¹ Year is from October 1 through September 30.

² In kilowatts.

³ In thousands of kilowatt-hours.

Source: Adapted from *Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook*, 1967, p. 131.

GOVERNMENT ATTITUDES AND POLICIES TOWARD INDUSTRY

Before independence industrial activity had been almost exclusively concerned with extraction and processing of the coun-

try's natural resources for export and was concentrated on rice milling, mining and timber extraction and milling. In 1939, 70 percent of registered factories were rice mills and sawmills. The largest single employer was the Burmah Oil Company of London, followed by several large mining companies. Industrial production of consumer goods was confined to a few textile mills, knitting factories, sugar refineries and small plants producing matches, soap, umbrellas, rope and light metal housewares. The large enterprises were primarily British owned, and the smaller were operated by Indians and Chinese.

Industry was severely damaged during World War II and had only begun to achieve some measure of rehabilitation when independence in 1948 was followed by civil insurrections that halted virtually all significant industrial activity until 1951. Oilfields and pipelines were sabotaged, major mines were in rebel-held territory and transport was thoroughly disrupted.

The newly independent government attempted to eliminate the economy's dependence on the unstable status of being primarily an exporter of agricultural commodities and minerals. Convinced of the need to achieve a higher level of self-sufficiency in consumer goods and vital medical and transport equipment, the government made industrial development central to its first comprehensive development plan. An 8-year plan, for 1952-60, proposed more than 50 industrial projects to be undertaken by the state. This high level of state participation in industry was seen as a major avenue of realizing the government's socialist philosophy, in which the means of production were ultimately to be owned, through the instrument of the state, by the Burmese people.

The 8-year plan did not establish priorities among industrial projects or give an estimate of the costs involved. As a consequence of these and other deficiencies, by the end of the plan period only 13 of the 50 projects had been partially or fully realized. Industries wholly owned and operated by the state were concerned with producing steel, jute bags, pharmaceuticals, brick and tile, refined sugar, tea, and silk and cotton textiles. The government also entered into joint ventures with foreign firms to speed rehabilitation of the oil and mining industries. The cement factory at Thayetmyo was nationalized. The Industrial Development Corporation, established in 1952, had the responsibility for administering various state enterprises, among them the steel, jute and sugar mills and the cement factory.

The decrease in foreign exchange earnings after the Korean war imposed limits on the pace of industrialization, and in the mid-1950's the government turned its attention to consolidating,

strengthening and reorganizing its industrial projects, many of which were in serious financial and production difficulties. In 1957 the government called a complete halt to new industrial investment by the state and concentrated on providing incentives for private domestic and foreign investors.

The Ne Win caretaker government of 1958-60 continued the process of consolidation and retrenchment of government industrial activity and made an energetic effort to introduce a greater degree of efficiency and rationality into government-run enterprises. A shortage of consumer goods for military personnel induced the Ne Win government to establish the Defense Service Institute for the orderly production and distribution of needed items. Originally intended as a post-exchange type of operation, the Defense Service Institute gradually increased the scope of its operations to serve many needs of the civilian population as well. By 1960 its activities encompassed banking, construction, transport, canning, shoe manufacture, wholesale and retail trade and importing. It also entered into joint ventures with foreign firms for the production of boots, shoes and spark plugs.

After the return to power of civilian government in 1960, a new body, the Burma Economic Development Corporation, was formed to assume control of some of the enterprises run by the Defense Service Institute. The new corporation also took over a number of other state enterprises which had been operating at a loss.

Both the Burma Economic Development Corporation and the Defense Service Institute were directed to encourage foreign investment. Such investment, however, was not to follow the previous joint venture pattern whereby ownership was divided between the government and the foreign firm. The government or Burmese nationals were to have full control, the foreign firm being confined to providing technology and raw materials. Additional incentive to foreign participation in industry was provided by introducing more flexibility into the Foreign Investments Protection Act, passed in 1959 under the first Ne Win government. The period guaranteed against nationalization was changed from 10 years to a period to be agreed upon by the government and foreign investors.

When Ne Win returned to power in early 1962, his Revolutionary Council immediately announced a shift in economic priorities. Industrial development was to be subordinated to the needs of agriculture, and new investment in industry was to be directed to the better utilization of agricultural resources and to serve agricultural needs. The Industrial Development Promotion Board was established to aid Burmese nationals in starting businesses.

It was hoped that the nationalization of import and export trade and later of internal wholesaling and retailing would induce merchants, primarily Indians and Chinese, to direct their capital and experience to industry. Foreign capital was explicitly discouraged from entering the country.

In late 1962 the Burma Economic Development Corporation was empowered to assume control of any state or semistate enterprise and to operate it according to strictly commercial criteria. The centralized control formerly exercised by the Industrial Development Corporation over state enterprises was to be relaxed, and factories were to operate on a more autonomous basis.

A major shift of emphasis occurred in early 1963. Disavowing previous assurances that in pursuing the Burmese Way to Socialism the government would assume control only of large- and medium-scale industries, the Revolutionary Council announced its intention of eventually taking over all industry. Private enterprise was to be virtually eliminated, and foreign investments were to be completely terminated.

As a first step the oil industry, in which the government held a half interest, was nationalized, as were the three major mining companies. All timber extraction and sawmilling were brought under government control.

The enterprises run by the Defense Service Institute and the Burma Economic Development Corporation were brought back under the centralized control of the Industrial Development Corporation. The nationalizations and reorganization were to be supervised by a new body, the Socialist Economic System Establishment Committee.

STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF INDUSTRY

The last census of industrial production was published in 1959. Including government enterprises, there were 3,950 industrial establishments of 10 or more employees. Production of these industries was valued at K1,053 million, and about 168,000 persons were employed. Food industries, predominantly rice mills, accounted for roughly 35 percent of the number of establishments and 40 percent of the value of production. Chemical, soap and vegetable oil production were second only to food in value of production, followed by textiles, tobacco, footwear and apparel, and wood and bamboo cane products.

There were nearly 95,000 home and cottage industries, defined as productive units employing less than 10 persons; their total production was valued at K679.9 million, and they employed 239,000 persons. Textiles led in both number of establishments and value of production. Wood and bamboo cane products were

second in number of establishments, followed by food industries, footwear and apparel.

The government's increasingly socialist policies since the time of the census have not significantly altered the composition and relative importance of these types of industrial concerns, although the number of such establishments has undoubtedly increased. Government loans specifically designed to promote cottage industry, totaling K1.75 million in 1964, have greatly increased the number of independent weavers and small weavers cooperatives.

The major impact of government policy on the structure and organization of industry has been in the establishment by the state in the late 1950's of a number of large-scale heavy industries which represented a net and qualitatively new addition to industrial production. These enterprises include a steel mill, pharmaceutical plant, jute mill and gunny bag factory, brick and tile factory and two sugar mills. The government's nationalization policy has also resulted in a shift of ownership among major industries which had been operating for many years. The major nationalized industries were oil, mining, cigarette production, hardwood timber extraction, cement and fisheries. Between independence and nationalization most of these concerns had been operated as joint ventures of the government and foreign concerns.

The oil industry, formerly a joint venture of the government and a number of British firms, dominated by the Burmah Oil Company, was nationalized in 1963 and renamed the People's Oil Company. The Mawchi Mine and the Anglo-Burma Tin Company, both joint-venture tin producers, were nationalized in 1963. The various cigarette industries, approximately six in number, were taken over in 1963 and termed the People's Cigarette Industry. The Burma Corporation, a joint venture mining lead, zinc and silver, was taken over and renamed the People's Bawdwin Industry in early 1965.

Both the original state enterprises and the nationalized concerns were organized as government boards and corporations under the general control of the Industrial Development Corporation, and their finances were included within the country's all-encompassing state budget (see ch. 24, Financial and Monetary System). Although the personnel of the nationalized industries in many cases were retained in their jobs, the nationalized enterprises were made the ultimate responsibility of various ministries, most of which were headed by military members of the Revolutionary Council (see ch. 13, The Governmental System).

In 1966 there remained a number of large- and medium-scale industries which had not been put under government control, but it had announced its intention of eventually taking them over.

Priority in nationalization had been given industries using domestic raw materials, such as the mining and timber concerns, and those producing foodstuffs, such as fisheries. It was estimated that roughly 40 percent of the larger industries remained in private hands in 1966, but there was no information on the nature of these still-private firms.

Nearly half of all industrial establishments employing more than 10 persons were located in Pegu Division, clustered around Rangoon, Insein and Kamayut. The next largest concentrations of industry were in Irrawaddy and Mandalay Divisions. Less than 5 percent of the establishments were in the constituent states.

Foreign advisers in the early 1950's recommended that industry be more widely dispersed throughout the country, but continuing conditions of insecurity from insurgents precluded such a policy. The inadequacies of the country's transport system also have hindered the establishment of any industry that requires the movement of heavy goods far from the port of Rangoon. Lack of electrical power resources in other parts of the country has been another factor requiring the concentration of industry in or near the capital.

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION

Industrial production fell considerably after the new government announced its espousal of a more socialistic economy. In 1963-64 the value of industrial production fell 9.2 percent, and the character of subsequent increases has been too erratic to permit any assumption that there will be a continued recovery. In 1965-66 the value of industrial production was K4.350 million, a 2.4 percent increase over the previous year (see table 9).

Table 9. Industrial Production in Burma, 1961-62 Through 1965-66

<i>Year ¹</i>	<i>Millions of Kyats ²</i>	<i>Percent of Change</i>
1961-62	3,600	—
1962-63	4,030	+ 11.9
1963-64	3,660	— 9.2
1964-65	4,250	+ 16.1
1965-66	4,350	+ 2.4

¹ Year is from October 1 through September 30.

² K4.76 equal US\$1.

Source: Adapted from *Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook*, 1967, p. 130.

The major factors affecting the level of production since 1962 have been the confusion and disorganization inevitably associated with the government's rapid takeover of many different enterprises. Effective operation of these units required a level of

administrative and technical expertise and experience that was beyond the grasp of already overburdened civil service personnel as well as the supervisory capacity of the Revolutionary Council itself. Many of the enterprises that were under state management when the second Ne Win government came to power were afflicted with a grave lack of skilled and professional management, with shortages of raw materials and with labor difficulties. Most state enterprises had been operating well under capacity. Nationalization of the oil and mining industries, the cigarette factories, hardwood sawmills and other enterprises served only to add to the government's burden and to exacerbate previously existing difficulties.

Production in the private sector was drastically affected by the government's policies. Concerns that remained in private hands in 1966 were operating under some of the same difficulties that affected the state-run industries, particularly the acquisition of raw materials and labor problems. The state takeover of foreign trade had made it particularly difficult for firms to obtain supplies and machinery from abroad, and some firms were proscribed from all importing. Furthermore, the country's internal distributive system had been disrupted by nationalization of wholesale and retail trade, and manufacturers had difficulties in marketing their products. Finally, investment levels fell precipitately since most concerns felt that they were operating under conditions of impending nationalization (see ch. 22, Domestic Trade; ch. 23, Foreign Economic Relations).

Mineral Production

Oil is the mainstay of the mineral industry, and in the mid-1960's production of refined oil products met about 85 percent of the country's domestic needs. Most crude oil comes from fields near Chauk in Magwe District, but there are lesser fields at Myanaung, Myingyan and Yenangyaung.

The oil industry is a very old one in Burma. Long before the coming of the British natural asphalt seepage had been extracted in small quantities by persons who were called "well eaters." The asphalt was used for weatherproofing houses. Organized production under the British began in the late nineteenth century. By 1939 crude oil production averaged 6.5 million barrels per year. The industry was heavily damaged during the war, and early attempts at reconstruction were stymied by insurgents' sabotage. The Burmah Oil Company nearly suspended operations altogether in the worst years of insurgency. In 1949 crude oil production was only 3 percent of prewar levels and by 1955 had increased only to 20 percent of prewar levels. In 1964, however,

4.3 million barrels of crude oil were produced, representing 65 percent of prewar levels.

Refining is accomplished at the Chauk site, reopened in 1954; at Syriam, a refinery located across the Rangoon River from the capital and restored in 1957; and at Yenangyaung, a smaller unit. The daily capacities of the three refineries in 1964 were 6,300, 20,000 and 1,700 barrels, respectively (1 barrel equals 42 gallons). Before the war a 350-mile pipeline had brought oil from the Chauk oilfield to the Syriam refinery. Insurgency prevented the repair and maintenance of the line, and until a fleet of tankers on the Irrawaddy River was in operation, oil from the Chauk refinery could be marketed only in Upper Burma.

Since domestic crude oil production falls short of both the country's refinery capacity and its internal needs, additional crude oil is imported from Indonesia. In 1965 the refineries produced 41 million gallons of gasoline, 35 million gallons of kerosene and 51 million gallons of diesel and other fuels. Some kerosene is exported.

The Mawchi Mine is one of the largest tungsten and tin mines in the world. Mines in Tenasserim Division are also large producers of tin and tungsten. Annual production of tin concentrate before World War II averaged 5,400 tons and mixed tin and tungsten concentrate stood at 5,600 tons. Postwar production was limited for years because of rebel activity and damaged transport systems. Production of tin concentrate stood at 1,792 tons in 1947. A world surplus of tin in the late 1950's caused prices to drop, and in 1957, Burma produced only 694 tons of tin concentrate. Subsequent world shortages induced increased production until 1960; thereafter production levels averaged about 828 tons yearly, but tungsten production decreased (see table 10).

Table 10. Mining Production in Burma, 1961-62 Thorough 1964-65 ¹
(in tons)

Mineral	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64	1964-65
Tin concentrates -----	896	786	862	770
Tungsten concentrates -----	250	70	121	56
Mixed tin and tungsten concentrates -----	1,172	1,235	1,079	690
Lead ores and concentrates ----	31,146	34,654	30,318	31,586
Zinc concentrates -----	14,678	14,961	14,421	14,132
Crude silver ² -----	1,830	2,127	1,892	1,744

¹ Year is from October 1 through September 30.
² Troy ounces.

Source: Adapted from *Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook*, 1967, p. 131.

Before the 1963 nationalization of the tin companies, they were operated as joint ventures, but they claimed that government-set prices were too low and that they could not adequately cover their costs. Most of the ore concentrates are shipped to Malaya for refining.

The Bawdwin mine in northern Shan State produces lead, zinc and silver. Prewar production of zinc concentrate averaged about 65,000 tons annually, and lead stood at 1,200 tons. In 1940 it was estimated that more than half of the mine's reserves of high-quality ore had been extracted, but new processing techniques have been developed that make possible effective use of heretofore unprofitable lower grade ores.

Production of coal from the Kalewa field by 1966 had not assumed significant quantities. Coal still had to be imported from India.

Burma has long been internationally famous for the size and quality of its precious and semiprecious stones. Pigeon-blood rubies, sapphires, tourmalines, amber and chrysoberyl were found north of Mandalay. Trade in gem stones has fallen greatly since before the war. Smuggling was rampant for some years, and the government's seizure of foreign trade disrupted traditional markets, especially in Hong Kong. The staple of the export trade in the 1960's was uncut jade. The more precious stones, available only in Rangoon shops, were sold in finished form.

Manufacturing

No detailed breakdown of manufacturing production was available, but an estimate for 1965-66 assessed the relative contributions of major categories. The food industry accounted for 57.8 percent of the value of production, housing and household goods for 13.6 percent, textiles and clothing for 12.4 percent, industrial raw materials for 10.4 percent, transport equipment for 2.2 percent and other industry for 3.6 percent. This structural breakdown is not significantly different from that of the early 1960's.

The food industry is dominated by rice mills. Production of milled rice and rice bran is dependent on harvest levels, and a drop in paddy production caused milled rice production to decline slightly in 1965-66 to 4.78 million tons from 4.84 million tons in the previous year. Rice bran is used in the production of oil, and edible and industrial rice bran oil production stood at 12 thousand tons in 1965-66. Production of other cooking oils—peanut, sesame and cottonseed—totaled 77.6 thousand tons in 1965-66.

The country was not self-sufficient in sugar production in mid-1967, despite a major effort to construct sugar mills since inde-

pendence. Production averaged 57,000 tons in the mid-1960's, but the country's domestic requirements were 70,000 tons. Mills at Zewaddy and Pyinmana were to increase production in 1967, a new mill at Namti was opened in early 1966, and a mill at Bilin, built with aid from Communist China, began production in March 1966. Total production ultimately was to reach 77,000 tons per year.

Tea production remained fairly steady at 1,800 tons, but cigarette manufacture fell after nationalization in 1963. Production of cheroots and cigars remained steady, however, probably because most production occurred in small private cottage units.

The country still had to import two-thirds of its textile requirements in the mid-1960's. There were five textile mills in operation in 1965, but production figures of yarn and fabric were unavailable. A major restraint on textile production was the lack of suitable cotton fiber, as most Burmese cotton was too coarse. Government loans to individual and cooperative societies of weavers were intended to help augment factory production, but the level of cottage industry production was unknown.

Gunny sack production from the state jute mill stood at about 31 million bags in 1965-66, but, despite a doubling of production since 1962, imports were still necessary. The jute mill had effected its increase by initiating three-shift production in 1964, but it still functioned under capacity because supplies of domestic and imported raw jute were inadequate.

One of the country's major consumer goods industries is the pharmaceutical plant. As prime minister, U Nu was particularly anxious that Burma never again suffer the critical shortage of medical supplies that had prevailed during World War II and wanted to make the country self-sufficient in pharmaceutical products. The pharmaceutical plant received top priority in the earliest industrialization programs, and under contract with a British firm it was completed in 1957.

The plant could not operate economically, since its productive capacity was too large for the Burmese market, and most of its supplies had to be obtained from abroad, usually at high cost. Its production was spread too thinly over a wide variety of patent medicines, cosmetics, drugs and antibiotics. The first Ne Win government in 1958 reduced much of the plant's unprofitable operations, prohibited competing imports and succeeded in eliminating its large yearly losses. Production figures, however, could not be determined from available statistics.

Capital goods industries were concentrated on production and the output of a small steel mill. The cement plant at Thayetmyo, operated by a British firm before the war, had supplied more

than 90 percent of the country's requirements. The plant resumed production in 1951, but produced little because of the low level of demand for cement during the latter part of the insurgency. It was nationalized in the mid-1950's but for some time operated well below capacity. An extension in 1961 brought its total capacity to more than 150,000 tons yearly, and plans were in progress to expand capacity to 300,000 tons. In 1965-66 cement production was 140,000 tons, representing a trebling of production over 1961-62. A state-owned brick and tile factory met domestic requirements for those products.

In the government's initial enthusiasm for industrialization, a steel mill was constructed in 1957 that was to use the scrap metal of abandoned war materiel. An electrically operated plant capable of producing 20,000 tons of rolled steel yearly was built by a West German firm outside of Rangoon. Lack of skilled personnel, overestimation of the amount of usable scrap and inability to compete with selected steel imports have resulted in intermittent closure of the mill and abandonment of some of its production capabilities. In 1963-64 it produced only 6,300 tons of sheets and 1,300 tons of rods.

An assembly plant producing trucks, buses and cars began production in 1964. The assembly plant, a joint venture arrangement with Japanese firms, produced 385 one-ton trucks in 1964-65, 750 diesel trucks in 1965-66, as well as a number of small passenger vehicles.

A number of electrical goods firms were proposed during the mid-1960's, primarily joint-venture arrangements, but there was no information as to whether or not they had actually begun construction or operations. Other proposals included production of automobile spare parts, spark plugs, sewing machines, refrigerators, radios, washing machines, paints, glass and ceramics.

CHAPTER 21

LABOR RELATIONS AND ORGANIZATION

The labor union movement has never been of great significance, and most of the limited success which it achieved came principally during the 1950's. The most important of the labor associations emerging after World War II were socialist or Marxist in their orientations and so closely related to political parties that their fortunes ebbed and flowed with those of their parent parties. Party figures frequently served also as officers of unions. The movement as a whole has not been effective as a bargaining agent, largely because the momentary gains obtained by unions supporting the governments in power have been neutralized by losses sustained by those supporting the opposition.

Organization has been heavily concentrated in government departments, factories and the transport services. It has been confined largely to the capital city and its environs, Mandalay, and the mines and oilfields; organization has been less comprehensive in other urban areas; and agriculture and cottage industry have remained unorganized. Skills of all kinds are in critically short supply, but there is chronic unemployment and underemployment among the unskilled. Recruitment of workers by the government-operated labor exchanges, to which most jobseekers are required to apply, has proved only moderately effective.

Although sufficient legislation has been enacted to give adequate protection to the labor force, it has been uneven in its effectiveness. Moreover, with the progressive nationalization of industry and trade during the mid-1960's, the actual provisions of laws affecting workers have come to be less significant than the policies of the government with respect to the organization and welfare of the labor force.

Under the revolutionary government, political parties of the opposition have been banned, and the unions that supported them have gone into eclipse. Labor disputes have abated sharply in number, and labor has been urged to increase productivity in recognition of the government's concern with the welfare of working people. Government spokesmen contend that, when laws were enacted under the parliamentary system, workers had no real opportunity to take part in the deliberations, which occurred only within the narrow confines of Parliament. They believed that under

a socialist democracy labor takes a direct part in the deliberations of a government that does not seek to exploit it as did previous administrations.

In place of the unions the government is moving to establish a system of councils of workers and peasants, membership to be automatically conferred on a nondiscriminatory basis to all working people. These councils are envisioned as being parapolitical; in a sense they are to replace the various political parties. The Burmese Socialist Program Party (BSPP), the only authorized political group, is seen in the future as the spokesman, through the councils, for the entire labor force.

CHARACTERISTICS OF LABOR

Supply of labor is more than adequate on a quantitative basis, and considerable unemployment exists among the unskilled in urban and in rural areas. On the other hand, there is a serious shortage of skills both in country and in town. There are not enough agronomists or veterinarians, persons proficient in the intricacies of international and domestic trade, engineers or workers skilled in the more sophisticated of the industrial occupations, well educated persons in teaching and professional roles and managers or administrators in all sectors of economic endeavor. This qualitative shortage in manpower is in large part a result of the departure from the country, increasingly since independence, of nonindigenous people who had entered during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and who had come to hold a near monopoly over the more important positions in industry, services and commerce.

The massive exodus of skilled persons of alien birth or extraction was occasioned by the release of a long smoldering resentment directed toward foreigners who held the more lucrative jobs and by the recent substantial nationalization of industry and trade. The indigenous labor filling the gaps left by the aliens has been recruited without stated distinction on the basis of ethnic origin or religion, but Burmans have taken nearly all of the vacated positions.

Most of the more important businesses, other than those related to mineral extraction, are located in urban portions of Burma proper where the best education and technical training can be found. Since few members of ethnic minority groups live in these areas, since some of the members of minorities do not speak Burmese and the government in Rangoon has little effective control over large portions of the frontier areas inhabited by the minorities, Burmans have assumed de facto leadership in business. The

minority elements of the frontier area, on the other hand, continue to live in farm villages by means of subsistence agriculture.

The rate of economic growth has been hindered as a consequence of the change from nonindigenous to indigenous economic leadership and the changeover from labor union to government direction of the labor movement. Educational and technical training facilities have been expanded, but the quality of instruction furnished prospective members of the labor force leaves much to be desired. In addition, the revolutionary government has achieved little success in its effort to remold the people's traditional cultural attitudes that are not conducive to increases in productivity. These considerations are generally recognized by the government, but they are regarded by planners as transitory ones, inevitable during a period in which the character and role of labor are undergoing drastic change (see ch. 4, Population and Labor Force; ch. 20, Industry).

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Recruitment of labor has become centralized under government control during recent years. The first public employment exchange was established in Rangoon in 1946, and a second at Mandalay 2 years later. In 1966, when the number of exchanges had risen to 11 units located in 9 urban centers, 9 more offices were opened in the Rangoon metropolitan area. This public employment system was given statutory sanction by the Employment and Training Act of 1950, but the most important stimulus to the registration of people seeking employment came with promulgation of the Restriction on Engagement Act of 1959, which required that all civil service entities, government-operated business and private establishments employing 50 or more workers use the exchanges for filling positions paying less than K400 (K4.76 equal US\$1) per month.

Since only a few professional and managerial positions were paid in excess of K400, this legislation substantially enlarged the registration rolls. After the nationalization of business, the exchanges became almost the only avenue of access open to those seeking employment in industry and commerce.

Businesses subject to the Restriction on Engagement Act must notify the nearest exchange office when job vacancies occur in their establishments, when they are given lists of registered persons qualified to fill the vacancies. They cannot fill a vacancy with an applicant not referred by the exchange until that exchange has informed the prospective employer that it has no person on its lists qualified to fill the position. The customary practice has been to promote from within to the better paid positions requiring skills

and to recruit externally only for the unskilled positions. This has been in part a result of pressure from unions, but it also has been a reflection of the critical shortage of skills of all kinds. In 1963 a public commission, appointed to investigate a large factory encountering serious production difficulties, found that 80 percent of the 4,000 names of prospective workers submitted to it were of unskilled persons.

No standard system of preemployment inquiry has ever been developed, and clearance for employment in the civil service or by government-operated business firms is determined on a political rather than on a proficiency basis. Late in 1963 the Employment Control Board was created in the Directorate of Labor; its purpose was to control the selection of public employees. The Board was directed to screen all applicants for employment in government departments, boards and corporations and to approve only those loyal to the BSPP and with no other political affiliations.

Private employers not covered by the Restriction on Engagement Act sometimes hired unskilled laborers through private labor contractors (*maistries*) who agreed to supply the required number of workers and who charged the prospective employees either a fixed fee before employment or a portion of their wages. The system was open to abuse because the contractor, in addition to obtaining his fee or commission, often extended loans at high interest rates and sometimes prescribed illegal conditions of employment.

The contractor system was used extensively during the colonial period and served as a means for introducing many unskilled workers from the Indian subcontinent. After the general nationalization of business and exclusion of foreign workers, the system ceased to be of importance, but in the mid-1960's it still was used sometimes in small seasonal activities, such as construction work and rice milling.

Until the assumption of power by the Revolutionary Council, there was no generally applicable minimum wage legislation for workers in industry and commerce, although the Minimum Wage Act of 1949 permitted the government to establish minimum wage scales in certain industries. Wages in these industries were fixed on the recommendation of groups made up of employers, employees and independent members with equal representation. The first regulations were established in 1953 at cigar and cheroot factories in Rangoon and Pegu and later were extended to factories in other areas. Still later, groups came into being in rice mills and a few other industries.

Under the Revolutionary Council a general K82 per month minimum wage was established for industrial workers, K40 of this representing basic wage and K42 representing a cost-of-living

allowance. Daily minimum wages were fixed at a gross of K3.15. The Council's policy seems to have been one of raising wages for unskilled workers to the minimum paid government employees and lowering those of skilled and professional personnel, where necessary, to conform to the scale of wages applicable to government employees. Shortly after nationalizing the Burmah Oil Company, for example, the administration reduced the salaries of the organization's supervisory employees to correspond to the lower government pay schedule.

Wages are low by Western standards and have increased little during recent years. Average monthly income in manufacturing, including wages of skilled personnel, rose from K151 to K159 between 1956 and 1964. During the same time span, women's income in this category increased to K106 to K130. Data concerning personnel insured by the Social Security Board in 1959-60 show that 66 percent received K120 or less per month; only 11 percent earned more than K206. A 1958 survey of several thousand Rangoon households with two or more members and monthly incomes below K400 found that household expenses had averaged K198 per month. Since costs have risen much faster than wages since 1958, more than one member in the average urban household must be employed if expenses are to be met.

The Agricultural Laborers' Minimum Wages Act of 1948, one of the first pieces of legislation of this kind to be introduced in Southeast Asia, attempted to apply minimum wages standard to an agricultural economy conditioned to paying its labor in kind rather than in cash. The law stated that no farm worker of either sex could be required to work more land than could be harrowed by a yoke of oxen. Seasonal workers of either sex would receive 35 percent of the yield from the area cultivated, plus their food.

The wages of agricultural workers in other than seasonal categories were to be stipulated at later dates, but insurgent activities in much of the hinterland, coupled with the impracticality of attempting to impose the sophisticated concept of minimum wages on a wages-in-kind payment system, have kept the law inoperative. The measure of wages for seasonal workers, however, seems to have served as a guideline for employers of farm labor.

Landless agricultural workers in the mid-1960's were being replaced by small farmers who had become proprietors under the land tenancy acts of the 1950's and 1960's (see ch. 19, Agriculture). Those who worked for others were still customarily paid in kind. Most of these landless people worked in the ricefields where more than half of the country's working population gained its livelihood. The cultivation season was up to 10 months, and a man hired for the entire period usually received about 100 baskets

of price per yoke (see Glossary) of land, about one-third of the yield; a woman received about 70 baskets. Food was customarily provided as part of the payment.

Temporary or casual labor at piece rates was often employed on farms in the past, and this custom is probably still fairly common. Payment varied, and higher wages were paid for harvesting than for threshing, and higher for transplanting than for weeding. In some instances, casual workers were employed for 25 days per month and received about the same wages as regular seasonal workers. In other instances, particularly in the dry zone, work was available only about half of the time.

The Social Security Act, in effect since 1956, applies principally to urban industrial workers. In 1964 about 80 percent of the persons contributing to the system were employed in Rangoon and its suburbs. It is, however, gradually being extended to other parts of the country. Work injury, sickness, maternity, disability, and survivor benefits are provided, but medical care for dependents of insured persons is not included (see ch. 4, Population and Labor Force).

Before the recent drive for nationalization of industry, many private industrial enterprises provided housing allowances and free medical care, and some government-owned entities extended comparable benefits. Year's end and holiday bonuses were also customary, and, although the Revolutionary Council has indicated its opposition to a bonus system, in 1963 it paid substantial premiums to employees of the nationalized Burmah Oil Company. The government is attempting to encourage worker productivity through nonmonetary means by awarding medals, by vacations at government-owned resorts, by special training courses in industrial techniques and by intensive indoctrination in the need for cooperation between government and workers.

The length of the workday and the workweek is governed by several acts affecting different sectors of the industrial and commercial communities, but the provisions vary only in detail. A 6-day workweek, with the Christian Sunday as a day of rest, is customary. In 1961 Sunday was replaced in this role by the Buddhist Sabbath, a lunar variant, but the consequent confusion led the Revolutionary Council to redesignate Sunday. Workweeks of up to 44 hours are customary in manufacturing industries where, in 1964, the International Labor Organization found the workday to average between 6.9 and 7.4 hours. A 48-hour week is customary in trading establishments, whereas civil servants observe a somewhat shorter week of about 35 hours. The agricultural labor force frequently works as many as 12 hours daily during plowing, transplanting and harvesting periods and is subject to time limitations.

Children under the age of 15 are not permitted to engage in nightwork; underground work in mines is prohibited for women and children; women are usually prohibited from working more than 8 hours a day; and the number of hours of night overtime for dockworkers is limited. Most commercial establishments must be closed between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m., but restaurants are permitted to remain open until 1 a.m.

The basic leave legislation, the Leave and Holidays Act of 1951, requires employers to grant workers leave with pay on the country's 14 national holidays. Government workers benefit also from a sufficient number of special holidays to give them a total of 20 per year. In addition, paid leave of 10 days per year is granted to workers earning less than K400 per month, and after 6 months of employment all workers are entitled to 30 days of paid medical leave per year. The legislation is not applicable to agricultural labor.

The Factories Act of 1934, as amended, and the Mines Act prescribe safety conditions in factories and mines, but there are no specific safety regulations in other fields of employment. The Workmen's Compensation Act of 1951 applies to most workers not covered by social security legislation. Under its provisions a maximum of K7,200 is awarded for death and K10,000 for permanent disability. There is no requirement that employers carry insurance to provide for compensation benefits, and benefits paid have been very moderate.

LABOR RELATIONS

The relationship between employer and employee is fully defined by legislation that is consistent with the principles of the Constitution, which was suspended in 1962; many of these laws were inherited from the British colonial administration. After the general nationalization of industry and trade, however, the relationship became a direct one between workers and the government in its role of employer and was patterned on the 1964 Law of Fundamental Rights and Responsibilities of Workers.

This decree legislation essentially seems to be a codification of already existing law which is made generally applicable without discrimination to all workers other than those in agriculture. Previously, there had been some discrimination. For example, leave legislation had been less liberal for low-ranking civil servants than for high-ranking employees, and comparatively little leave had been granted by law to workers in certain industries where minimum wage limits had been placed in effect. In practice, however, the continued incidence of insurgent activity, difficulty in communications and inadequacy of enforcement mechanisms have pre-

vented full application of the principle of equal treatment to workers throughout the country.

The Law of Fundamental Rights and Responsibilities of Workers is an innovation in that it establishes the responsibilities as well as the rights of workers. These include care in the use of machinery, the need for devoting maximum effort to increasing productivity, the promotion of unity among working people and some half-dozen other objectives. They are not susceptible to enforcement by legal means but serve as a kind of manifesto in which the revolutionary government states what it hopes and expects of the working people.

In general, the attitude of the revolutionary government toward labor is paternalistic, although it has sometimes been firm in discouraging strikes and in jailing union officers who have attempted opposition. It seems to have a genuine expectation that peasants and workers will cooperate in improving efficiency and in dedication to work. Workers seem to be reasonably satisfied with their status and are freely permitted individually to give voice to their moderate grievances. They have disappointed the government by their failure to transform themselves into a more effective working force, but governmental efforts to bring about greater productivity have been confined to devices for encouragement and to propaganda statements, which at times have had the sound of supplication.

The basic law concerning the organization of labor is the Trade Unions Act of 1926 which, with its amendments, provides a system of government registration and encouragement of unions that meet certain requirements. Under it, to qualify for registration, a union must have a minimum of 10 members, and at least 50 percent of the employees in any establishment supporting a local union must be registered. Nonregistered unions are not prohibited by the Act and may decide their own membership rules. In 1961 only about one-third of the total union membership belonged to registered units.

Unions, whether locals, federations or central organizations, almost invariably have been related closely to a political party. In the case of the central organizations the relationship often has been so close that the party has served as the organization's political sponsor. Even at the local level, union officials frequently have been political leaders, although a 1959 amendment to the Trade Unions Act prohibited persons not employed by an enterprise from holding office in the union representing its workers.

This identification of the labor movement with politics had its roots in developments occurring soon after the end of World War II. The movement was small and hesitant at the beginning, and its growth was less a spontaneous act than a consequence of

the efforts of a few professional people and intellectuals who, looking forward to independence, realized that unions could be instruments of considerable political importance in the new state. They saw that parties would need followers who were nation conscious, discontented and politically active. These characteristics were unlikely to be found among the tradition-directed peasantry, but their occurrence was predictable among the urban workers, who often had been uprooted from their villages, were ambitious and were resentful of the higher status enjoyed by much of the nonindigenous labor force. In time the linkage between politics and unions was strengthened, and, in the years between independence in 1948 and the 1962 coup, union support was among the major political assets of the party in power.

In 1962 the International Labor Organization prepared a report on the Burmese labor union situation, in which it observed that some unions might benefit temporarily at the expense of others through enjoyment of political support, but that the movement as a whole eventually could benefit only through the strength of purpose of its members and the cohesiveness of its organization. This observation proved prophetic, as the establishment of the BSPP, the abolishment of all other political parties and the progressive nationalization of industry and commerce had the automatic effect of stifling the politically oriented labor union movement.

During its brief existence, unionism was strongest in the government departments, public services, joint public and private ventures and large private industrial enterprises. There were a few locals in rice mills, but a majority of such small industrial installations as textile mills and cigar and cheroot plants were left unorganized because of their small size, seasonal nature and extensive use of casual and female workers. Few commercial establishments were organized, but some of the largest and most active unions were found in the service occupations. Among the most important of these were dockworkers, railroad workers and seamen.

Unions were structured either vertically on an industrywide basis or horizontally on the basis of such general occupational categories as production or clerical work. Affiliation by specific trade or skill, however, was not customary. Some local unions were independent, but most maintained a central affiliation that sometimes changed with the fortunes of the political party with which its central organization was associated.

The labor union movement was never very effective. The Buddhist feeling of disengagement with the interests of others, the traditional peasant resistance to change and the lack of strong groups of skilled workers were among the factors mitigating against organization. Unions that did come into being were small

and lacked experienced organizers and the funds necessary to carry out militant activity. Even during their strongest period they were not able to gain many concessions from management above those called for by legislation. Between 1952 and 1958 wages for unskilled labor rose only about 10 percent. Most of this modest increase can probably be attributed to gradual implementation of the Minimum Wage Act of 1949, which was applicable to only a few industries, rather than to collective bargaining. The unions' doubtful effectiveness was in compelling employers in industry to fill vacancies by promoting persons already on the rolls rather than by hiring from the outside.

Union membership enjoyed its greatest increase during the years between independence and 1958, when it reached a claimed total of about 400,000. This figure, however, included both registered and unregistered membership and probably involved both inflation in numbers and duplication of names of persons who belonged to more than one group. Under the 1958-60 Ne Win caretaker government it declined sharply but recovered to about 200,000 by late in 1961. At that time there were 173 registered unions with 64,521 members.

During the first 10 years after independence the most important central labor group was the Trade Union Congress, Burma [TUC(B)], which was affiliated with the socialist-oriented Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL), that was then in power. The TUC(B) drew its strength from the government, discouraged strikes and in general acted less as a determined representative of labor than as an agent to mediate difficulties between labor and management. During the 1950's it increased its membership substantially, however, so that by the end of 1957, 260 of the 356 recognized labor unions were its affiliates, and it reported a total membership of 150,000.

In 1958 internal dissension within the AFPFL resulted in a split in the TUC(B), the defection of many of its constituent unions and the loss of its association with the government. The splinter group then formed the nucleus of a new central entity, the Union of Burma Labor Organization (ULO), which was given active support by Prime Minister U Nu, and it quickly became the dominant central organization. Factionalism was rampant at this time, and competing elements supporting these two central groups were frequently found in a single factory. A third group, which had made its appearance early in the 1950's, was the Communist-oriented Burma Trade Union Congress (BTUC), a small association founded by dissident elements of the TUC(B). Of the independent unions at this time, the largest were made up of civil

servants who were prohibited by law from affiliation with any federation or central body.

After their sharp decline under the regime of the military caretaker government, unions began to recover strength in 1960 with the return to power of U Nu. The chief beneficiary was the ULO, which by late 1961 claimed a registered and unregistered strength of 80,000 persons. At that time the overall strength of the TUC (B) had decreased to 15,000 members, and the BTUC could claim only 5,000. Federations and independent unions added another 100,000 to the total claimed union membership, but this total represented only about half of the 1958 peak.

Soon after installation of the government of the Revolutionary Council, what was to be a virtually complete liquidation of the organized labor movement began. The new administration established the BSPP, made public its intention to create a single non-political national labor organization and urged individual unions to break with their parent bodies and join the proposed government-sponsored entity. The ULO was the first to collapse. Its strongest unions at once began to disassociate themselves, and, in July 1962, the organization dissolved itself with the recommendation that its remaining membership participate in the new governmental labor program.

Alarmed at these developments, the BTUC announced its opposition to the government's program, with the consequence that in late 1963 its leaders were arrested and its activities curtailed. Many individual unions at the factory level were being dissolved by their members, and in March 1964 the end came with the announcement of the National Solidarity Law, which prohibited affiliation by any organization with any political party other than the BSPP.

In 1963 plans were announced for the formation of the People's Workers' Council, which would concern itself with working conditions, production and the efficiency of civil servants and workers in government corporations. A central body was to take the lead in this movement, direct labor activities in the Rangoon area and supervise the establishment of local councils elsewhere in the country. It was also to encourage the formation of basic workers' unions in every factory, mill office, or other establishment in every region of the country employing seasonal and temporary as well as regular workers. If this were accomplished the Workers' Council would be in a position to guide the progress of the labor force on the Burmese Way to Socialism.

Formation of the new labor structure, however, has been slow. A decree of December 1964 provided guidelines for the establishment of the People's Workers' Council system, but it was not until

1967 that actual organization of the system commenced. The government has expanded its original plans for the new structure of labor to include also the Peasants' Council, to be made up of all agriculturists. Thus, the economically active elements of the population have been designated workers or peasants, and, in order to lend ceremonial emphasis to these designations, annual peasants' and workers' days have been established. These occasions feature weeklong seminars at which selected peasants and workers from the various parts of the country are brought to Rangoon to review their problems and goals.

The first meetings have featured speeches and discussion groups in which individual complaints have been voiced freely, but emphasis has been placed on the freedom from discrimination of any kind which is to characterize the new labor movement and on the responsibilities which the councils are to have for the health, education and general welfare of their members (see ch. 4, Population and Labor Force). The failure of the council system to develop more rapidly has been attributed to the reluctance of the Revolutionary Council to transfer any authority to a council that it does not fully control.

Management organizations have never been important factors in labor-management relations, and they appear to have marshaled little opposition to the government's economic nationalization policy. Among the principal organizations have been the Union of Burma Chamber of Commerce and the Burma Chamber of Commerce, which represented the Burmese and the European businessmen, respectively; Moslem, Chinese and Indian associations; the Federation of Trades Organization; and the All-Burma Rice Industrialists Association. Only the Rice Industrialists Association attempted seriously to formulate or place in effect any common policy of its membership in transactions with labor unions.

Before the revolutionary government assumed control in 1962, the settlement of work disputes was based on the Trade Disputes Act, a heritage of the British colonial administration. It involved consultation between labor and management and, if agreement could not be reached, by settlement of the dispute through government-administered conciliation procedures. If that also failed, recourse to arbitration in the court system was available.

The revolutionary government recognized most of existing legislation bearing on labor disputes but promptly set about revising the mechanism for enforcing it. Some disputes have been settled promptly by direct action of Directorate of Labor officials, and in August 1963 the settlement of industrial disputes that could not be accomplished by direct consultation was placed in the hands of the Central Labor Committee, which had authority to issue binding

directives on any industry or other business establishment, except agriculture. The Committee was composed of 23 members, including 4 representatives of labor, under the chairmanship of a member of the Revolutionary Council.

A change in policy instituted in labor-management relations by the new government was indicated by the composition and actions of temporary subcommittees that were established promptly under the Central Labor Committee, to settle a heavy load of cases pending at the time. Both management and labor were represented on the first subcommittees, which, in each instance, were chaired by a military officer who was a recent graduate of a short course on the Burmese Way to Socialism at the Central School of Political Science. After settling some 20 cases, all decided in favor of the labor petitioners, the first group of subcommittees was disbanded and replaced successively by other groups in order to clear up the remainder of the backlog. Unlike the first, these groups did not include representatives of management in their membership.

The cases coming before the subcommittees involved grievances over pay and related matters rather than work stoppages. The revolutionary government had made clear its disapproval of these stoppages; lockouts had been virtually unknown, and strikes had never been of much concern. From 1958 through 1960 an estimated average of less than 1 day each year per worker was lost because of strikes, and since the 1962 coup this has dropped substantially. In 1961, 1962 and 1963 there were 17, 6 and 4 strikes, involving 4,348 847 and 308 workers, respectively. There is no evidence, however, that the chronically high rate of absenteeism on the part of workers has shown any corresponding decrease. Irregular attendance at work and lack of punctuality, rather than organized work stoppages, have been continuing subjects of complaint by government spokesmen.

The only central labor group ever to associate itself formally with an international labor movement was the BTUC, which became a member of the Communist-oriented World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). The non-Communist International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), however, maintained informal relations with both the ULO and the TUC(B) through an office in Rangoon which was closed early in 1964 upon dissolution of these organizations. The Free Trade Unions of Burma (FTUB), a small federation with its nucleus in the Seamen's Union of Burma, was constituted in 1960 with the announced intention of becoming a member of the ICFTU. Formal affiliation, however, was never accomplished.

Before the military coup of 1962 a few individual unions had enjoyed international ties. The All-Burma Postal Workers' Fed-

eration and the Burma Postal Union were affiliated with the Postal Telegraph and Telephone International, and the Seamen's Union of Burma was associated with the International Transport Workers' Union. In addition, before 1962 individual unions and labor leaders frequently took part in international labor meetings. Since the military coup, however, participation in international labor affairs has been strictly controlled. Invitations to attend international meetings must be channeled through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and cannot be extended in the name of any specific individual or organization. Participants are selected by the government.

As a British colony Burma had participated in the International Labor Organization, and, after achieving independence, it became a member in its own right. Before the 1962 coup it was active in affairs of the organization and had subscribed to 21 of its conventions, but since that time the country has played more the role of an observer. In the late 1960's the government was continuing to abide by International Labor Organization decisions based on conventions to which it had subscribed and was continuing to avail itself of assistance made available by the organization. Assistance recently has taken the form of a badly needed manpower utilization study, which was reported in progress in 1966.

CHAPTER 22

DOMESTIC TRADE

Domestic trade, which accounts for about one-fifth of the country's gross domestic product was in the mid-1960's the subject of intense government and public concern. Commercial activity, since colonial times, had been dominated by large British trading houses and Indian and Chinese merchants. In endeavoring to pursue economic policies directed solely to the welfare of the Burmese people and to eliminate foreign control of the economy, the Revolutionary Government of General Ne Win in 1964 nationalized all trading activity—domestic and foreign, wholesale and retail, foreign- and Burmese-owned alike.

This action, adding to the already overwhelming burdens borne by the government and civil service in administering a great variety of government activities, resulted in a serious disruption of the movements of goods throughout the country. Many essential items were in short supply, prices rose and black markets flourished. Likening nationalization of private business to "having caught hold of a tiger's tail," General Ne Win affirmed his government's firm intention to "hang on." In view of the almost total breakdown of distribution, however, the Revolutionary Council did, in late 1966, permit trade in a number of essential consumer items to revert to private hands. Rice, the staple food of the country, remained in the hands of the State Agricultural Marketing Board, which had sole responsibility for export and internal distribution of rice. All internal movement of imports and exports remained in government hands.

The great bulk of the country's domestic trade is in three kinds of commodities—food, textiles and clothing, and tobacco products. Rice, most vegetables and meat are from domestic sources. Most tea, sugar and all condensed milk is imported. Many fish products, particularly the vitally important *ngapi*, a paste made from dried shrimp, are imported. Although domestic textile production has increased, most textile requirements still come from abroad, particularly India. Tobacco products, notably cheroots, are largely of domestic origin.

In 1967 it seemed that all importing and exporting would continue in government hands, as well as the internal distribution of rice. Even a partial return of trade to private hands, under a

Ne Win government, would have to meet the dual requirements that there be freedom from foreign control and that operation of trade be in accord with the principles of Burmese socialism.

The greater part of the country's goods move by water transport. Railroads, once important in the rice trade, were severely damaged during the war, and emphasis since independence has been placed on building up an extensive network of all-weather roads. Progress has been held back, however, by conditions of insecurity from the civil war, by lack of funds and by a shortage of technical personnel. The greatest improvements were in shipping facilities, vital to the continued flow of exports.

TRADITIONAL TRADE PATTERNS

During the colonial period trade had been organized on roughly ethnic lines. Some trade was controlled by large British export-import companies which acted as wholesalers for imports. A few British department stores maintained large establishments in Rangoon and smaller branches in major towns. These stores catered primarily to British customers, as their wares were irrelevant to the needs of most Burmese or beyond their financial means.

Most of the retail trade was handled by Indians. Indians also maintained wholesale importing companies which distributed textiles from India. Textiles and clothing represented a major gap in the country's ability to be self-sufficient in basic consumer needs. Indian merchants were the major distributors of other imported items in common demand by Burmese, such as kerosene lamps, umbrellas and bicycles.

In both rural and urban areas, trade was carried on primarily in small, Indian family-owned shops. Chinese also maintained small shops, but their participation in trade was smaller than that of the Indians, partly because the Chinese had arrived in Burma later than had the Indians and in smaller groups.

Burmese participation in commerce was limited to petty trading in fresh foods, cheroots, hand-crafted jewelry and some hand-woven textiles. Much of this trade was in markets and bazaars in towns and cities, where most of the stall holders were women. In small villages a Burmese woman often supplemented her family's income by keeping a small supply of basic provisions, probably purchased from itinerant Indian merchants, on hand to sell to her neighbors.

During World War II Japanese firms replaced the British trading houses and many of the larger Indian mercantile concerns as well. Many Burmese were quick to step into the breach left by the departure of Indian merchants, and Burmese mercantile associations in the retail trade became quite important. When the British

returned in the postwar period the country was badly in need of food and clothing. The British established the Civil Supplies Management Board to distribute imports, and installed a system of rationing in major cities and maintained shops in larger towns and villages.

In 1948 the independent government continued the Civil Supplies Management Board, but augmented it by promoting consumers' and wholesalers' cooperatives to encourage Burmese participation in commerce. The insurgency following independence, however, destroyed the government distributive system. Goods became extremely scarce and prices extremely high. As the government became increasingly preoccupied with internal security, domestic trade reverted to more or less prewar patterns. Burmese traders found themselves unable to compete with Indians, who often accepted lower levels of living and thus could offer lower prices and who frequently had access to easier credit terms through Indian moneylenders and Indian-owned banks.

Trade in towns and cities was still conducted in small family shops, commonly located in bamboo structures which also served as living quarters. Often these shops specialized in the sale of one or two varieties of goods. Cities and towns of any size had municipal bazaars where individual traders rented space to display their wares.

In the larger cities—Rangoon, Mandalay, Moulmein and Bassein—there were large-scale bazaars which were in daily operation, from early morning until evening. Stalls, displaying a large variety of foods, textiles and hardwares, were crowded together inside bazaar buildings and along adjacent sidewalks. Divided into sections according to types of merchandise, fish, meat, vegetables, cloth, cooking utensils, finished items of clothing and many other commodities, bazaars offered nearly every item needed for ordinary consumption. There were also separate, specialized bazaars, such as one in Rangoon entirely devoted to the sale of yard goods, as well as the more general type.

Burmese women played an important role in retail trade, and operated a substantial number of bazaar stalls. Stalls conducted jointly by husband and wife were effectively controlled, as far as finances and business decisions were concerned, by the wife. It is a popularly held Burmese view that, in business and financial matters, women are more sophisticated and shrewder than men and that they are more adept at earning and retaining money.

In rural areas, the same pattern was found on a smaller scale. Small Indian or Chinese family shops could be found in nearly every village. Larger villages might also have bazaars where

traders, again often Burmese women, would bring in fresh produce for sale.

Trade in rice followed two patterns, depending upon the ultimate destination. Rice intended for export was purchased from millers, primarily by the State Agricultural Marketing Board at fixed prices, although some rice was also exported by private traders. Millers purchased paddy from the farmers, and although the price paid farmers was controlled by the Board, the Board's low price to the miller meant that the farmer received even less for his produce. In the late 1950's the Board began to pay farmers directly, but its purchasing price was still considered to be low and a constraint on increased agricultural production.

Rice intended for internal use was often handled by millers who doubled as merchants. Except for that rice kept for immediate home consumption by farming families, then, nearly all production was handled by the State Agricultural Marketing Board or merchant-millers, most of whom were Chinese.

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

Government intervention in domestic trade was, until the late 1950's, largely confined to the handling of exports through the State Agricultural Marketing Board and the State Timber Board. The Civil Supplies Management Board sold imported cotton yarn, condensed milk, tea and sugar to weavers and consumer cooperatives in limited quantities. These latter activities were designed not so much to change the structure of trade patterns as merely to limit importer profiteering. Most importing concerns were foreign-owned, and rising prices caused considerable resentment on the part of the Burmese population.

The caretaker government of General Ne Win, which governed the country from 1958 to 1960, imposed price controls on essential commodities and established a number of small industries, services and retailing concerns to ensure an adequate supply of consumer goods for military personnel. The organization, called the Defense Service Institute, grew rapidly and by 1960 was performing banking, transport and distribution services for a large part of the civilian population as well.

When the civilian government of U Nu returned in early 1960 it removed price controls imposed by the military, and prices began immediately to rise. In trying to hold down the cost of living, the State Agricultural Marketing Board opened distribution centers for the sale of rice at controlled prices and the government maintained controls on the price of kerosene. A new organization, the Burma Economic Development Corporation, was created in 1961 and assumed control of some of the Defense Service Insti-

tute concerns and began to take over a number of import companies. The Defense Service Institute, however, continued to operate a new retail, department and grocery stores in Rangoon.

The Burma Economic Development Corporation continued to expand into commerce, particularly in taking over foreign-owned trading concerns, and in early 1962 the government announced that through the Corporation all of the import trade would be nationalized. General Ne Win's coup of March 1962 prevented these measures from being carried out, and the new government announced that it would defer such nationalization for two years. It did, however, suspend open general import licensing for foreign firms, in effect permitting them to import only under strictly regulated conditions. These firms were notified to be prepared for eventual nationalization.

One of the first acts of the Ne Win government was to place all trade in rice under the State Agricultural Marketing Board. The Board had been the major channel for rice exports since 1946, but a small amount of trade had continued to be handled by private exporters. From 1963 on, however, the Board was to control all exporting as well as all internal distribution. Private trade in rice, heretofore dominated by Chinese, was completely eliminated. A slight loosening of regulations occurred in 1964 when the Board rescinded previous requirements that farmers take rice intended for their own consumption only to millers approved by the Board and, instead, permitted them to take this rice to any miller that was convenient.

In December 1963 a new body, the People's Stores Corporation, was formed by the government to take over the remnants of previous government ventures into trade, such as the Civil Supplies Management Board, dating from the early postwar period. The Corporation was also put in charge of distribution of imports from the firms previously taken over by the Burma Economic Development Corporation. It also handled a few exports.

In March 1964 the government nationalized all wholesaling, brokerage houses, department stores, shops and consumer cooperatives in the city of Rangoon. Its action did not affect trade in fresh foods, tobacco products, umbrellas, shoes, or hotels and tea shops, presumably because much of this relatively small-scale trade was conducted by Burmese. In April these measures were extended to the rest of the country. More than 12,000 establishments were affected. Trade in sesame and peanuts, which provide the oils essential to Burmese cooking and are therefore important determinants of the general cost of living, was taken over and prices were fixed.

The unintended result of this all-encompassing action was to disrupt thoroughly the system of distribution and caused prices to

rise for rice, fresh fish, cooking oils, fruit and clothing, all essential consumer goods. The number of shops in Rangoon declined by one-third within a month following nationalization. Customers had to stand in line for whatever goods were available. There were reports of discrimination in favor of army and government personnel, and foreigners found it difficult to obtain any goods at all.

The shops were run as part of the People's Stores Corporation under the general direction of the Socialist Economic System Establishment Committee, responsible for administering parallel nationalization of banking and industry. The nationalized shops suffered from a chronic lack of coordination. Transportation, forwarding and stocktaking had to be handled by inexperienced civil service personnel. Goods were sometimes sold at different prices in neighboring government shops. In late 1964 the government rescinded part of its action by returning some small Burmese-owned shops to their owners.

The Indian and Chinese trading communities were the most severely affected by the nationalizations. Many Indians left the country in 1964 and 1965, often under conditions of extreme hardship. More than 96,000 of the 108,000 Indian nationals registered as foreigners were repatriated by mid-1965. These figures do not include, however, a probably significant number of Indians who were not registered as foreigners, particularly those who had been born in Burma of families that had come to the country in the nineteenth century. An agreement between the Burmese and Indian Governments in 1967 offered lump sum compensation for property taken over during the nationalization, but there was no detailed information on the terms of such compensation.

The Chinese, whose businesses were also affected by nationalization, did not leave the country in large numbers. Many Chinese had assimilated themselves more closely into Burmese society than had the Indians, and many were reluctant to enter Communist China.

The People's Stores Corporation was dissolved in October 1965 and replaced by a Trade Council. There was no information as to whether the Trade Council's functions have differed essentially from those of the People's Stores Corporation.

The 1964 nationalization of trade had affected a limited number of commodities, but in early 1966 the government extended its control of trade to more than 400 items, practically everything that was essential. More than two million persons were thrown into unemployment. Resulting dislocations and shortages were so acute that 34 essential commodities were decontrolled in mid-1966, including potatoes, onions, chili peppers, cooking oils, beans and peas. In October 1966 minor forest items, often quite important

basic fuel needs, such as charcoal, firewood, bamboo and cane, were also decontrolled. It was expected that these liberalization measures would enable about half a million persons to find employment.

In January 1964 the government formed the Export Agency, Burma, to which all private exporters had to surrender their licenses. It is not clear what commodity exports were affected. Rice and timber exports were already the monopoly of state agencies, but it may be that other agricultural products and minerals were affected.

TRANSPORTATION

Shipping

Water transport is extremely important to the country's economic life. Much of the terrain is difficult to traverse, and the great rivers, the Irrawaddy, the Chindwin and the Salween, provide the major natural arteries. Running only from north to south, however, these rivers have limited usefulness as total links for all parts of the country. The Irrawaddy is navigable for 900 miles, from Bhamo in the north to Rangoon, by way of the Twante Canal linking the river to the Rangoon River. The Chindwin is navigable for 400 miles from its mouth at the confluence with Irrawaddy at Myingyan, but the Salween is navigable only for 100 miles north of Moulmein.

The number of good natural harbors is limited. Rangoon is the natural focus of trade, and its port facilities in late 1966 included 13 wharves, 65 pontoons, 296 warehouses, 14 transit sheds, 90 cranes, 77 tractors and 427 trailers. The port's prewar handling capacity was 5 million tons annually. In 1965 it handled 3 million tons, but it is likely that the lower figure is as much the result of lower export levels generally as of decreased handling capacity of the port itself. Other ports are Sittwe, Sandoway, Bassein, Moulmein, Mergui, all of which are undergoing improvements. Moulmein is an important port of timber exports. Most of the rice destined for export is shipped to Rangoon via the Irrawaddy or through the many small waterways in the delta. This latter type of transport is handled by small vessels. In the prewar period, such small vessels using these arteries carried fully as much tonnage of rice as did the railway system.

A shipyard is being constructed at Simalaik on the Hlaing River near Rangoon. It will have docking facilities for private coastal vessels, navy and Five Star Line Ships of up to 1,700 tons and will be able to build ships of up to 1,000 tons. The first stage of the dockyard, a slipway, is to be completed by 1969.

Shipping in the postwar era was handled at first by the Union

of Burma Shipping Board, which took over private British and Indian steamship companies in 1952. The Board handled coastal trade, but since most of its vessels were of rather deep draught, they could not make effective use of all of the country's ports. The Board, operating as a subsidized department of the Ministry of Transport, was not subject to commercial operating criteria and functioned continuously at a loss.

A second shipping concern, the Union of Burma Five Star Line, was started under the first Ne Win government in 1958 as part of the Defense Service Institute. Taken over by the Burma Economic Development Corporation in 1960, the Five Star Line took over the business and ships of the Union of Burma Shipping Board in 1961. Operating on strictly commercial principles, the Five Star Line increased from two ships totaling 15,000 tons in 1959 to 22 ships totaling 220,000 tons in 1962. The Line also charters foreign vessels for shipping exports to European and Asian destinations. In 1965 the freight cargo handled by the Line was 1.2 million tons.

Inland water transport is the responsibility of the Inland Water Transport Board, which took over the British-owned Arracan Flotilla Company in 1953. A special project to build shallow-draft barges for transporting coal and crude oil on the Chindwin, Sittang and upper Salween was under way in 1966. In 1966 the Board had 166 passenger vessels, 20 cargo vessels and 49 barges. More than 2,000 private craft were registered in 1965.

Railways and Roads

The railway system, built in the colonial period to facilitate export of rice, timber and mineral products, was badly damaged by the war, and the insurgency further delayed its rehabilitation. The main line, from Rangoon to Myitkyina via Mandalay, was restored only in 1954. Rail lines are single track, and traffic has to be operated on a shuttle system, with trains stopping at numerous stations to wait until the line ahead is clear. Railway inadequacies have been a major factor causing uneven internal distribution of rice, particularly in areas where supplementary water or road transport is unavailable.

In 1965 route mileage stood at 2,443 miles. About a fifth of the railroad's 380 locomotives were diesel, the remainder being steam-powered. Freight carried by the railroad has remained at about 3 million tons yearly during the 1960's. In 1965 freight in ton-miles stood at 520 million and passenger-miles at 1,497 million. Agricultural products account for about half of freight carried, mineral products for 15 percent and forest products for 20 percent.

Road transport is very important for medium and short distances in the country, but the road system had not, by 1967, fully

recovered from the damages suffered during the war and the insurgency. There were no figures on the amount of paved roads in the country, but one source estimated that there were 19,000 miles of roadways, including paved and unpaved. In 1958 the government concluded an agreement with the United States for construction of an all-weather road between Rangoon and Mandalay. Work was begun on the road, but in 1964 the government terminated the agreement before the road had been completed. Its status in 1967 was unknown.

In 1966 there were 16,000 trucks and 6,200 passenger buses in the country. Jeeps left by departing British and Japanese armies provided a major form of transport over the rougher parts of the country. The bullock and buffalo, however, continued to be the major form of transport in rural areas where water transport was insufficient.

Air Transport

Air transport is entirely operated by the Union of Burma Airways, which acts as agent for all foreign airlines. Given the inadequacies of rail and road transport, and the fluctuating levels of internal security, air transport has been particularly important in transporting goods and passengers throughout the country. In 1966 there were 32 airfields in the country, 11 of which are equipped with night facilities and radio controls. Mingaladon airport in Rangoon is a fully equipped international airport. The Union of Burma Airways in 1966 had 14 commercial aircraft, 8 Dakotas, 3 Viscounts and 3 Fokker Friendship craft. In 1966 the Airways carried 6,900 tons of freight and passenger miles stood at 59,000.

CHAPTER 23

FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS

The economy depends heavily on export earnings to finance imports vital to much ordinary consumption as well as capital investment goods for development. Foreign economic assistance is accepted from any source to accelerate development, so long as it does not compromise the country's neutralist foreign policy, but in the mid-1960's foreign aid was only a secondary adjunct to the country's own internal efforts and export earnings as a source of development finance.

The country usually enjoys a trade surplus, earning more from its exports of rice, timber, metal ores, petroleum products and various agricultural products than it spends on textiles, manufactures, processed foods, machinery and transport equipment. There have, however, been problems in maintaining a high level of agricultural production and obstacles created by wartime destruction and postindependence insurgency. Difficulties in regaining the prewar high level of exports of oil, timber and metals have led to a decreased and often erratic export income, and rising internal demand and the heavy capital import requirements of development projects have placed a severe drain on foreign exchange holdings.

Rice is the major export, and in the mid-1960's it accounted for about 70 percent of total export earnings. Although it was formerly the world's leading exporter of rice, Burma suffered severe setbacks in production during World War II and later insurgency, and in the mid-1960's it held third place among world exporters of rice. Exports of timber, metal ores and petroleum products had been important before the war, equal to about half of all exports, but in 1966 none of these categories represented more than 15 percent of total export earnings.

Major export markets are India and Ceylon, among the country's oldest trading partners, as well as Indonesia, Japan and Malaysia. Since the mid-1950's Communist countries, the Soviet Union and Communist China being the most important, have taken substantial amounts of Burmese exports. The United Kingdom, once a principal purchaser of timber and petroleum products, has been declining steadily as an important market since Burma won its independence in 1948.

Despite serious efforts to increase production, textiles and clothing account for nearly one-fifth of total imports. Other major categories of imports are metal manufactures, machinery and transport equipment. Japan, Communist China and the United Kingdom were major suppliers in the mid-1960's, and the United States was beginning to assume the position of a major supplier by 1964.

The government's attitude toward economic assistance from external sources has changed significantly since the first years of independence. Initially convinced of the necessity and desirability of foreign aid and private foreign investment, the government had, by the mid-1960's, prohibited foreign investment altogether, had seriously begun to question the efficacy of external aid projects in furthering economic development and had specifically rejected any type of assistance that might either impinge on the country's neutralist foreign policy or exert pressure on internal politics and economic policy.

Until 1954 economic assistance had come almost exclusively from Western sources, primarily the United States. Dissatisfied with the type of aid received from the United States and distrustful of that country's motives, particularly regarding its alleged backing of Nationalist Chinese guerrillas operating along the Sino-Burmese border, the Burmese Government abrogated all United States aid agreements in 1953. In the following years a wider range of donors was sought, with considerable success. Aid was accepted from Communist China, the Soviet Union and various Eastern European countries, but this had fallen to minimal levels by the mid-1960's. United States assistance, in the form of Public Law 480 sales of agricultural products, was resumed in 1956, but economic assistance has been greatly scaled down from the levels of earlier years. In 1967 only a few projects were being financed from Public Law 480 funds obtained under an agreement concluded in 1957.

Reparations payments from Japan are an important source of external assistance, and limited technical and economic help is obtained from West Germany, Israel, Australia and Great Britain.

COMPOSITION OF TRADE

The relative contributions made by the country's major exports have changed markedly since 1939. In the pre-World War II colonial period exports other than rice earned approximately half of the total export earnings. Petroleum products accounted for about 30 percent. Metal ores—tin, tungsten, lead, zinc and silver—made up between 10 and 15 percent, and timber exports accounted for between 5 and 10 percent.

During the war trade fell to about 5 percent of its prewar level. The oil and mining industries were severely damaged by the war and had just begun the process of rehabilitation when civil insurgency intervened and halted further recovery, since both oilfields and major mines were located in areas suffering the severest unrest. Timber extraction and processing virtually stopped because many of the rebel groups inhabited the forested regions. Rice was the only export that could be maintained, but in 1948 exports had attained only one-third of the prewar volume.

By 1960 timber and mineral exports had reached modest levels. The country had little difficulty in finding markets for teak. Its export was limited by internal difficulties in extracting, milling and transporting teak to the ports of Rangoon and Moulmein. Exports of other hardwoods, once a substantial proportion of timber exports, were limited by the high level of demand for wood within the country.

Mineral exports have lagged severely. Mines were slow to resume production, even after the major threats from internal insecurity had been eliminated. Labor disputes and mining companies' reluctance to invest in new equipment hindered production, and nationalization of all major mines in the early 1960's did little to increase yields. Sagging world prices, particularly for tin and tungsten ores, have further discouraged increased production for export.

Petroleum, once the country's second largest export, was of minimal significance in trade in the 1960's. Only small amounts of kerosene and paraffin wax were exported. A rising internal demand and the depletion of some oilfields have made it necessary for the country to import from Indonesia nearly one-fifth of its crude oil requirements.

A postwar addition to the country's exports that has become increasingly important is a composite of various agricultural products other than rice. Chief among these products are beans and grain; peanut and sesame oilcakes are used as animal feed. Minor items include short-staple cotton fiber, corn, potatoes, raw rubber and hides and skins. Increased exports appear to be dependent mainly on increased production, since most of these products enjoy good markets. A situation of general stagnation in agriculture, however, has limited their contribution (see ch. 19, Agriculture).

In 1964-65 exports of rice and rice products stood at K645.1 million (K4.76 equal US\$1), a decline of 15 percent from the previous year. Improvement in earnings from other agricultural products more than made up the decrease in rice receipts, however. Teak earnings decreased slightly but accounted for about 13 percent of total exports (see table 11).

Table 11. Major Exports of Burma, 1961-62 and 1964-65 ¹

(in millions of kyats ²)

Item	1961-62	1964-65
Rice and rice products.....	852.1	645.1
Other agricultural products.....	217.8	213.6
Teak	125.0	146.6
Hardwood	7.1	1.7
Metals and ores.....	42.6	57.1
Other	22.2	13.9
Total	1,266.8	1,078.0

¹ Fiscal year, which is from October 1 through September 30.

² K4.76 equal US\$1.

Source: Adapted from *Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook*, 1967, p. 129.

Both the level and the composition of imports have been determined in large degree by the necessity to conserve foreign exchange because of falling exports. Importing has been subject to more or less strict licensing since independence. Because of the complete nationalization of foreign trade by 1964, the government could virtually dictate the goods that were to be imported.

After independence severe restrictions amounted to an almost complete elimination of luxury items. Imports in the 1960's consisted of about 70 percent consumer goods, the remainder being capital and transport goods. Normally, food imports account for little more than 5 percent of total imports, but, despite the achievement of near self-sufficiency in wheat, coffee and tea in the mid-1960's, an acute shortage of cooking oils from domestic sources increased food imports to nearly 15 percent of the total in 1965. The most important food imports are condensed milk, sugar, and fish products, primarily dried shrimp paste.

Except for the extremely large imports of cooking oils in 1964-65, textiles remained the largest single category of imported consumer goods, amounting to K128.3 million (see table 12). Despite the establishment of a number of textile mills since independence, the country, in 1967, had been unable to produce sufficient good quality raw cotton or silk to permit the mills to operate at full capacity, and two-thirds of the domestic textile requirements still had to be imported. A similar inability to produce sufficient raw jute for the government-owned jute mill necessitated substantial imports of gunny sacks for bagging rice.

About half of the capital goods imports consist of machinery and transport equipment. Most purchases are for government-sponsored development programs, and agricultural machinery figured heavily in purchases in 1964-65.

*Table 12. Major Imports of Burma, 1961-62 and 1964-65*¹

(in millions of kyats²)

<i>Item</i>	<i>1961-62</i>	<i>1964-65</i>
Wheat and wheat products	14.3	4.0
Milk products	50.4	80.8
Sugar	7.3	28.0
Coffee	0.5	—
Meat	0.5	0.5
Fish products	17.6	11.6
Spices	3.0	2.9
Oils and fats	14.3	175.0
Tobacco	1.6	0.2
Chemicals	20.8	21.3
Pharmaceuticals	37.8	43.3
Textiles	199.6	128.3
Gunny sacks	33.6	42.8
Cement	10.2	1.5
Coal and coke	18.5	12.1
Refined mineral oil	17.8	20.1
Scientific instruments	11.8	12.5
Base metal manufactures	132.9	158.9
Machinery and transport equipment	187.7	237.2
Rubber manufactures	22.2	23.9

¹ Fiscal year, which is from October 1 through September 30.

² K4.76 equals US\$1.

Source: Adapted from *Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook*, 1967, p. 129.

DIRECTION OF TRADE

Until the 1950's most of the country's trade followed a triangular pattern with Great Britain and India. India bought rice, timber and oil—about three-fifths of Burma's exports—and in return supplied nearly half of Burma's imports, mainly textiles, coal, steel, iron and metalware. Great Britain purchased a substantial amount of timber and petroleum products in return for manufactures and machinery. Ceylon, Indonesia and Malaysia were also important rice markets.

Changing world market conditions for rice in the 1950's caused a major shift in the direction of the country's trade, both import and export. Export markets were diversified, and new suppliers of imports took an increasing share of the Burmese market.

In the early 1950's an extremely high level of world demand for rice allowed Burma to sell easily through familiar channels. This same level of demand, however, encouraged increased rice production in some major Burmese markets, such as India and Indonesia, and brought into world trade new producers, such as Egypt, Brazil and Mexico. United States distribution of rice in Asian coun-

tries under foreign aid programs further disrupted the supply situation to which Burma had become accustomed. In 1953 increased supply and falling demand, the latter a result of the end of the Korean war, caused prices to fall sharply. After an initial period of lethargy, in which the Burmese Government expected prices to stabilize at a fairly high level, it was forced actively to seek new customers and to bargain with higher quality produce in old markets.

The most radical change in the direction of the country's export trade came in 1954 when, partly as a result of large United States distributions of rice in Asian countries under Public Law 480 assistance, Burma turned to the Soviet Union and Communist China, both of which were eager to come to the country's aid by absorbing surplus rice. By 1956 trade agreements were in effect with Communist China, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, East Germany, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

The most important change in the direction of import trade was Japan's displacement of India and the United Kingdom as Burma's major suppliers. The precipitating factor was the termination of the Ottawa Agreements in 1953. The Ottawa Agreements were a system of preferential tariffs that were in effect among members of the British Commonwealth. Although it was not a member of the Commonwealth, Burma participated in the Ottawa Agreements. Termination of preferential tariff treatment for British and Indian goods, particularly textiles, enabled Japan to compete effectively, and the Japanese share of the Burmese market has increased steadily. Generally, the sources of imports have become more diverse, and the United States and various Eastern European countries have become increasingly important.

In 1965 about half of the country's trade, both export and import, was conducted with Asian countries, excluding the Soviet Union. Japan and China were the two leading suppliers, and Ceylon and India were the principal markets for exports (see tables 13, 14).

The volume of total trade was largest with Japan, which supplied nearly 30 percent of imports and bought nearly 10 percent of exports. Japanese purchases were concentrated on rice and timber, but they have increased minimally, largely in response to Burma's pressure to modify its large trade deficit with Japan. Japanese goods have become increasingly popular in Burma as they are more attractive and usually less expensive than those available from other countries. This is particularly true of textiles and light housewares. Imports from Japan in the 1960's averaged about K260 million yearly, 40 percent of which were such capital goods as machinery, transport equipment and base metals.

Table 13. Burma's Major Suppliers of Imports, 1961-65

(in millions of dollars)

	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
Japan	45.6	50.0	61.4	46.5	71.5
Communist China	20.6	28.6	26.4	31.7	27.7
United Kingdom	33.9	32.7	32.0	25.7	21.9
United States	8.2	9.7	15.2	25.7	16.6
Pakistan	12.1	6.1	9.1	16.1	12.9
Malaysia and Singapore	9.3	6.3	2.2	14.1	12.5
India	13.1	11.5	10.1	15.5	12.2
West Germany	9.4	11.5	8.7	13.6	8.1
Australia	5.6	7.4	10.6	4.0	7.3
Czechoslovakia	2.2	3.7	6.0	2.7	5.6
Yugoslavia	1.5	1.8	0.8	0.9	2.6
Hong Kong	4.5	5.2	4.2	0.9	0.9

Source: Adapted from *Direction of Trade, Annual 1961-65*, pp. 83, 84.

Table 14. Burma's Major Export Markets, 1961-65

(in millions of dollars *)

	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
Ceylon	22.0	28.1	31.2	26.5	28.0
India	18.9	25.5	21.2	18.5	23.1
Japan	8.8	12.8	15.6	15.8	22.0
Communist China	37.7	17.1	12.3	16.7	17.5
Soviet Union	—	9.4	9.1	16.7	13.1
United Kingdom	23.9	25.0	26.4	21.5	12.8
Malaysia and Singapore	9.3	6.3	2.2	14.1	12.5
Indonesia	31.5	31.0	31.4	33.2	8.0
Pakistan	16.9	21.0	25.4	13.8	7.4
West Germany	3.9	5.5	7.5	6.5	6.2
Hong Kong	4.7	8.6	5.4	2.8	3.0

* K4.76 equal US\$1.

Source: Adapted from *Direction of Trade, Annual 1961-65*, pp. 83, 84.

Significant trade with Communist China dates from 1954, when, largely in reaction to American disposal of large stocks of rice in Burma's traditional Asian markets—particularly Ceylon, India, Japan, Pakistan and Indonesia—the Burmese Government turned to Communist countries to help dispose of huge stocks of surplus rice. In 1955 a 3-year agreement was negotiated for China to take 150,000 tons of rice a year. Eighty percent of the payment was to be made in goods from Communist countries, the balance in British sterling. Since 1957, however, these essentially barter agreements have been replaced by trade on a cash basis, partly because of Burmese dissatisfaction with the usefulness and quality of much of the goods received.

The volume of trade with China has fallen since the late 1950's, but in 1965 China was still the fourth largest market for Burmese goods and the country's second largest supplier of imports. The high level of imports from China in part reflects goods and equipment imported for development projects to be financed under a K400 million credit extended by China in 1961.

Long the country's most important trading partner, India in 1965 supplied less than 5 percent of all imports and took only 10 percent of Burmese exports. Increased production of rice within India and large United States food-aid programs to India significantly decreased both the absolute amounts of rice purchased and India's relative importance as an export market. In 1957 India bought nearly 500,000 tons of rice, but in 1965 it had contracted to purchase only 200,000 tons of the 1966 crop.

In addition to rice, India buys teak, refined pig lead, lac and seed potatoes. Burma's purchases from India are concentrated in raw jute for gunny sacks, dried fish, raw cotton, textiles and coal. A 3-year trade agreement was signed in 1963 to stimulate trade, but increases since that time have been negligible.

Trade with the United Kingdom, like that of India, has declined steadily in relative importance since Burma's independence. In 1965, however, the United Kingdom was the third largest supplier of imports, furnishing nearly 9 percent of the total, but it took only 5.7 percent of the country's exports. About half of the sales to the United Kingdom are peanut and sesame oilcake. Timber, mostly teak, accounts for slightly more than 10 percent; raw cotton, metal and ores are among the other major items.

For many years Great Britain held its lead in the Burmese market because the people were familiar with British goods and much of their machinery and equipment was built to British specifications. Communist China has gradually insinuated itself into the British share of the Burmese market, particularly through its barter and aid agreements, but Great Britain is still an important supplier of machinery, transport equipment, pharmaceuticals, mineral fuels and textiles.

The United States moved rapidly into the position of a major supplier; its exports to Burma tripled between 1961 and 1964. These products consist mainly of machinery and transport equipment, long-staple raw cotton and pharmaceutical products. American exports face considerable competition from Japan, Communist China and Eastern European countries, however, and it is far from certain that the United States will easily maintain the position it had gained in the mid-1960's. Burma's exports to the United States are relatively small, the most important items being high quality teak and short-staple cotton.

Trade with the Soviet Union follows a pattern quite different from that of trade with the United States since the Soviet Union is an important market for rice, but it supplies little import trade to Burma. Trade has been balanced by means of credits taken in goods from Eastern European countries, which appear to be more popular than Soviet goods. Eastern European states take few of the country's exports, but Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and, to a lesser degree, Poland, Rumania and Hungary have found small but dependable outlets for goods in Burma.

ORGANIZATION OF TRADE

The domination of foreign trade activities by foreigners had long been a source of irritation to many Burmese. Before independence, exports and imports were handled primarily by large British trading companies. A few trading concerns were operated by Indians, but the British dominated, their businesses often being branches of large companies operating on a worldwide basis. These companies acted as wholesale distributors of imports and frequently maintained their own retail system of distribution. Most retailing, however, was handled by small, Indian-owned shops on a family basis (see ch. 22, Domestic Trade).

The only significant change to occur in the structure of foreign trade organization was the creation of the State Agricultural Marketing Board. This government agency was intended to handle the export of rice, which was previously the domain of the British companies. By the late 1950's, however, more than half of the rice exports were still in private hands. In 1961 the U Nu government announced that all import trade was to be nationalized, but the Ne Win government, after assuming power in March 1962, stated that such action would be postponed for 2 years. Foreign firms, however, within 6 months of the takeover, were to lose their open general import licenses and could import only those specific items deemed necessary by the government.

In an apparent rescinding of the postponement of nationalization, the government announced in late 1963 that a new agency would be created, the Myanma Export-Import Agency, to handle all importing. This body was to be a branch of the People's Stores Corporation, created to administer the nationalization of domestic trade that was to occur in early 1964.

In January 1964 another agency, the Export Agency, Burma, was established to handle all exports not under government control. By 1964 all trade in rice and other major agricultural exports was in the hands of the State Agricultural Marketing Board, and all timber exports, both teak and hardwoods, were under the control of the State Timber Board. The State Agricultural Marketing

Board, the State Timber Board and the Export Agency, Burma, were to handle all transactions concluded on a government-to-government basis, and the Myanma Export-Import Agency was to deal with private foreign buyers and sellers.

In October 1965 the People's Stores Corporation was replaced by the Trade Council, which retained control of the Myanma Export-Import Agency. Imports were distributed throughout the country in government-run shops, most of which had been taken over from Indian retailers.

FOREIGN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

United States Aid

The history of United States aid to Burma is a troubled one, in which both countries' early inexperience in operating aid programs and the repercussions of political developments throughout Asia often led to misunderstanding, frustration and irritation on both sides.

Economic assistance had an apparently favorable beginning in 1950 in the Special Technical and Economic Mission, which was to institute a wide variety of programs to rehabilitate the economy, which had been damaged by World War II and by civil insurgency. Of \$31 million appropriated, approximately \$21 million was expended by 1953, primarily on transportation improvements, commodity imports to relieve shortages, agricultural development and health facilities. These funds also covered the financing of the American economic and engineering consultants, Knappen-Tippett-Abbott, whose report, the "Economic and Engineering Survey," became a major factor influencing the country's subsequent development programs.

Political developments throughout Asia and the United States—the Korean war, independence struggles in Indochina and American preoccupation with the spread of communism in Asia—seriously affected the United States aid program in Burma (see ch. 15, Foreign Relations). The Burmese resented American efforts to attach political conditions to economic assistance, and differences between the two countries regarding the most desirable form of development assistance caused the Burmese to suspect that the United States was not so much concerned with a healthy and balanced development effort as with a short program to prevent the country from succumbing to communism.

The Burmese were particularly disturbed by the United States' reluctance to exert pressure on Nationalist China to curb the activities of its guerrillas operating from Burma and seriously endangering Burma's relations with Communist China. In March

1953 the Burmese Government notified the United States that it no longer wanted the aid program to continue.

In the following years Burma turned more toward Communist countries for assistance, particularly in disposing of its large stocks of rice, markets for which had been disrupted by American food aid programs in other Asian countries. In 1956, United States aid to Burma was resumed, but on a greatly reduced scale. An agreement was signed that year under Public Law 480 whereby the United States would provide \$22.7 million of surplus agricultural commodities to Burma, to be repaid over a period of 40 years. Eighty percent of the repaid funds—payable in kyats or dollars—were to be used in Burma for development projects, the remainder being used to defray official American expenses within the country.

In 1957 the United States advanced a credit of \$25 million, to be repaid in the same manner as the Public Law 480 commodity sales agreement. Much of this credit was devoted to improving the country's system of inland water transportation. Other agreements in 1957 and 1958 provided \$10 million in police equipment and the United States purchase of textiles from India for sale in the Burmese market.

In 1959 a grant of \$30 million and additional funds from commodity sales in Burma were designated to finance the construction of buildings at Rangoon University and a modern highway from Rangoon to Mandalay. The University project was completed by 1966, but in a disagreement with the United States over the design and route of the highway, the Ne Win government in 1964 notified the United States to terminate its participation in the construction of the highway.

No new aid agreements have been negotiated since 1962, but a number of minor projects are still being financed from unused Public Law 480 funds. Total United States aid to Burma between 1950 and 1965 amounted to \$145 million, not all of which had been fully utilized by 1967.

Communist Aid

Burma's first economic encounter with Communist countries was in the form of barter trade agreements concluded between 1954 and 1956 with Communist China, the Soviet Union and various Eastern European countries. These countries took surplus rice from Burma and, through multilateral clearing accounts, settled in goods and services.

The first ostensible aid agreement with a Communist country was concluded with the Soviet Union in 1957 and is referred to as the Russian Gift Project. In return for the donation of a number of projects—an institute of technology, a hotel, a hospital, a

theater, a sports stadium, a swimming pool, a conference hall and a permanent exhibition hall—the Burmese were to meet all local costs and deliver specified amounts of rice to the Soviet Union for a period of 20 years. This agreement differed little from the straight barter agreements, and, dissatisfied with the expense, the Burmese Government canceled the agreement in 1959 with only the first three projects having been completed.

In 1958 the Soviet Union made a loan equivalent to between \$4 million and \$7 million to meet the cost of irrigation dams. In 1965 it also extended a credit of K5.2 million for the purchase of tractors and agricultural equipment and a loan of K18.5 million, part of which was to be used for equipment to survey irrigation projects.

In conjunction with the Sino-Burmese Boundary Treaty of 1960, Communist China and Burma concluded the Economic Aid Agreement, which consisted of a credit of K400 million, to be used to meet external costs of an agreed-upon list of development projects. The credit was to be repaid without interest in 10 years, beginning in 1971. The projects involved were two hydroelectric power plants, a tire, a textile, a plywood, a paper and a diesel engine factory, two sugar mills and an enlargement of the country's steel mill. The government was also enabled to advance some funds from Chinese credit to the private sector. By mid-1966 one sugar mill had been completed, and work was in progress on the textile and paper mills, the plywood factory and two hydroelectric plants. One bridge had been completed, and two more were planned.

Burma has also received small amounts of assistance, primarily technical, from Eastern European countries. In 1962, Rumania provided technical assistance in exploration and drilling for oil, and in 1964, Yugoslavia extended a credit of K38 million for unspecified agricultural and industrial projects. East Germany advanced a credit of K67 million in 1964 for health, educational and sports projects.

Other Assistance

Japanese reparations to Burma for damages suffered during the Japanese invasion and occupation of World War II have been the largest single source of external assistance. An agreement signed in 1952 provided for the payment of K959.6 million, to be extended over a 10-year period. In 1961 the Burmese Government, feeling that other states that had not suffered such severe wartime damage had obtained a disproportionate share of reparations payments, sought to obtain a supplementary agreement from the Japanese.

A 12-year agreement concluded in 1963 provided an additional K668 million. Payment was to be made largely in technical and engineering services. The most important project completed with Japanese help has been the large hydroelectric plant and dam at Baluchaung (see ch. 20, Industry). Other goods donated as reparations have been railroad equipment, automobiles and buses and agricultural machinery. An automobile assembly plant was established in 1965 by a Japanese firm. Assistance has also been directed to oil exploration and agricultural development.

In 1962 the West German Government provided a K42 million grant and guaranteed a private credit of K120 million. The official grant was unrestricted, to be used how and where the Burmese Government desired. Part of the private credit was used to purchase new ships for the Burmese merchant marine. These ships were to be constructed in Hamburg. Other projects under construction with West German help were glass, brick, tile and canning factories, a spinning and weaving mill and a plant to manufacture diesel engines, electric motors and power tillers.

Aid from the United Kingdom has been channeled through the Colombo Plan. Assistance has been primarily educational and technical, and Great Britain has supplied educational and scientific equipment to Rangoon University as well as to various technological and agricultural institutes.

Australia, also operating under the Colombo Plan, has provided both capital and technical assistance to Burma. By June 1965, Australia had provided K8.5 million of capital aid, primarily in the form of buses and irrigation pumps, and K5.3 million of technical assistance.

Israel has made a limited but important contribution to Burma's development in providing a number of irrigation and agricultural technicians. The Burmese are anxious to increase yields from irrigated rice in the dry zone of the country, and they have found Israeli technology to be extremely effective.

BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

The country's balance of payments, recording the status of all external transactions, showed a small surplus in 1965, a surplus that was achieved at the cost of depleting foreign exchange reserves.

The country usually enjoys in merchandise trade a surplus balance that averages about K150 million yearly. In 1965 the surplus of K142.1 million was offset, however, by a high level of expenditure for services. Expenditures on freight, insurance, travel and other transportation are persistently higher than revenues obtained in providing the same services to foreigners. Receipts and

expenditures on investment income have achieved near equality, as the country is rapidly eliminating private foreign investment and apparently is not investing abroad.

In 1965 the major service expenditure was for government expenses primarily for imported defense material not included under regular merchandise imports. The net balance on goods and services in 1965 was a deficit of K87 million (see table 15).

Table 15. Burma's Balance of Payments, 1965

(in millions of kyats ¹)

	<i>Credit</i>	<i>Debit</i>
GOODS AND SERVICES		
Exports	1,136.3	
Imports		994.2
<i>Balance of trade</i>	142.1	
Freight and insurance	19.7	40.2
Travel and transportation	9.8	86.6
Investment income	19.0	19.1
Government transactions	21.7	138.7
Other services	10.4	25.1
<i>Net services</i>		229.1
<i>Net goods and services</i>		87.0
TRANSFER PAYMENTS		
Private	5.2	3.5
Government	49.9	14.5
<i>Net transfer payments</i>	37.1	
<i>Net goods, services and transfers</i>		49.9
LOANS AND INVESTMENTS		
Government:		
Loans received	104.0	25.6
Other long-term liabilities		6.3
United States Government		
holdings of kyats		11.4
IBRD ² and IDA ³ holdings of kyats	0.1	
SAMB ⁴ accounts receivable		110.9
<i>Net loans and investments</i>		50.1
MONETARY MOVEMENTS		
Commercial bank liabilities		4.6
Commercial bank assets		27.2
Union Bank of Burma liabilities		37.4
Union Bank of Burma assets	165.2	
Government reserves	1.3	
Other Union Bank claims	163.9	
<i>Net monetary movements</i>	96.0	
NET ERRORS AND OMISSIONS	4.0	

¹ K4.76 equal US\$1.

² International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

³ International Development Association.

⁴ State Agricultural Marketing Board.

Source: Adapted from *Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook*, 1967, p. 129.

Private transfer payments cover transfers of wealth to persons resident in Burma, whereas resident Indians' and Pakistanis' remittances to their families abroad represent a net transfer of wealth out of the country. In the 1960's the volume of these payments decreased steadily as many Indians and Pakistanis left Burma.

Government transfer payments included reparations received from Japan, grants of goods and services from the Russian Gift Project and grants in dollars from the United States. Deficit items were contributions to the administrative expenses of international organizations and transfers of rice to the Soviet Union under the Russian Gift Project. As the level of foreign assistance from all sources fell, transfer payments declined accordingly. In 1963 net transfer payments stood at K135.3 million, but in 1965 they had declined to K37.1 million. Thus, the net surplus on transfer payments reduced the K87 million merchandise deficit, leaving a total current account deficit of K49.9 million.

There has been virtually no private investment since 1964, either direct or long-term portfolio investment. The last significant entry to occur under private investment was in 1963, when a large deficit resulted from the government's purchase of the British-owned shares of the Burmah Oil Company and private foreign commercial banks repatriated their capital after nationalization.

In 1965 all investment entries were attributed to the government, and the loans and investment account recorded an outflow of K50.1 million. Of loans received by the central government, in 1964 drawings stood at K104 million in repayment of loans at K25.6 million. Of these loans, the largest drawings were K74.5 on the credit extended by Communist China in 1961 and K18.5 million from a United States grant made in 1957. Repayments, concentrated on the debt owed to the government of India at the time of Burma's separation, amounted to K16.7 million yearly (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

Changes in United States Government holdings of kyats and other Public Law 480 liabilities reflect purchases by Burma of United States surplus agricultural products and drawing by the United States of kyats generated by Burmese purchases. Entries under the State Agricultural Marketing Board accounts receivable cover changes in short-term debts so that agency for rice exported one year and paid for the next. In 1965 the country's debtors paid K110.9 million to the State Agricultural Marketing Board; this represented a debiting of the country's potential assets.

The total deficit of K100 million on merchandise, services, transfer payments and loans and investments meant that monetary

movements were needed to balance all transactions. The largest single balancing item in the monetary account was a net drawing down of the Union Bank of Burma's assets of K165.2, considered a credit item, as it represented a discharged debt. Net monetary outflows stood at K96 million, which, with the balancing K4 million for net errors and omissions, accounted for the K100 million deficit on other accounts.

CHAPTER 24

FINANCIAL AND MONETARY SYSTEM

A major aim of all governments in power since independence has been to provide the financial institutions and fiscal and monetary policies necessary to help transform a colonial, foreign trade-oriented economy, operated largely by foreigners, into an economic system whose major function would be to increase the well-being of the Burmese people. Changes in the financial and monetary system have been accompanied by changes in the structure and functions of virtually every aspect of the country's economic life (see ch. 18, Character and Structure of the Economy).

Early steps taken by the independent government were focused on filling the urgent credit needs of an agricultural system that had been badly damaged by world war and civil insurrection. A central bank, the Union Bank of Burma, provided a degree of monetary independence from the foreign-owned commercial banks which had directed the bulk of their resources to the development of foreign trade.

The most drastic changes were carried out by the Ne Win government that assumed power in 1962. All commercial banks were nationalized in early 1963, and the following year wholesale and retail trade, mining, industry and export and import concerns were taken over by the government. In mid-1966 a centralization of banking brought all such activity under the direct control of the government's Union Bank. The effective of these measures was to shift practically all financial transactions into the government's hands. The private sector's need for funds fell sharply, and most financial undertakings became budgetary transactions. The state budget during the mid-1960's encompassed more than half of the country's gross domestic product.

Aside from the activities of its nationalized business enterprises, the largest item of current government expenditure was on defense and internal security. Capital expenditures for development purposes were concentrated on education, agriculture, health and public works. State needs for financing were met primarily from internal resources, notably the profits of the various boards and corporations. The State Agricultural Marketing Board, whose monopoly of internal and foreign trade in rice brought in large profits, was the largest single source of government revenue.

Budget deficits were moderate and financed primarily by borrowing from the Union Bank. A small amount of foreign loans supplemented revenue from internal sources. The country withdrew from the Sterling Area in 1966, thus gaining a greater degree of financial independence in international transactions.

The currency is the kyat, a paper currency backed by foreign exchange and gold holdings. The par value, established with the International Monetary Fund in 1953, is 4.76 to US\$1. The official rate of exchange has remained steady since independence, at approximately this rate. Foreign exchange reserves in 1967 were quite high, and a large percentage of them were held in gold.

THE UNION BANK OF BURMA

Shortly after independence in January 1948 the Union Bank of Burma was established in Rangoon as the country's central bank. Owned entirely by the government, it acts as banker to the government, sells government securities, issues the currency and exercises general control over all other financial institutions.

Before the commercial banks were nationalized in 1963 the Union Bank exercised general supervisory functions over them. All banks had to be licensed for operation in the country by the Union Bank. The Union Bank attempted to influence commercial bank credit policy through manipulation of reserve requirements and discount rates. Its effectiveness in determining the scope and direction of commercial bank lending was limited, however. The Burmese-owned banks were too small to have much impact upon the economy, and the larger, foreign-owned banks could, by drawing on the resources of their parent institutions, operate fairly independently of the restrictions that the Union Bank sought to impose.

Since nationalization of the commercial banks, the Union Bank has assumed a greater responsibility for direction and control of the country's entire financial system. Although there was little direct evidence, it appeared that the Bank's policies were set by the government and that its independence of action was quite limited.

COMMERCIAL BANKING

In the colonial period commercial banking was geared primarily to serve the needs of the foreign trade sector and was dominated by foreign banks, mostly British, Chinese and Indian. The financial needs of the domestic economy were served only insofar as those needs were relevant to the development and prospering of foreign trade, particularly exports of rice and timber. The

British-owned banks, usually branches of large concerns that operated on an international basis, were important in financing rail and port facilities and the extensive drainage and irrigation works that brought large parts of the rich delta area under cultivation. Funds for the actual development of cultivation were provided to individual farmers by the immigrant Chettyar money-lenders from southern India, who frequently obtained their funds from Indian banks.

The entire economy, banking included, was thoroughly disrupted during World War II, and the country's productive capacity was severely injured. The departure of the Chettyars during the war, while undoubtedly welcomed by debt-ridden farmers, left a large gap in the economy. Nevertheless, commercial banking was reestablished on much the same lines as before, with virtually no attempt being made to serve the most pressing need of the economy—rehabilitation of agriculture.

When independence was achieved the new government took a number of steps designed to create a financial system more responsive to the needs of the economy as a whole. The immediate need for agricultural credit was partly met by the establishment of the State Agricultural Bank, which provided government funds to farmers through village banks and cooperative societies. The commercial banks were brought under the supervision of the new central bank, the Union Bank of Burma.

The Bank's major instrument for controlling commercial bank credit policies was the requirement that the banks maintain a specified percentage of their total deposits on reserve with the Union Bank. The reserve against demand deposits varied between 8 and 40 percent, and the reserve against time deposits, between 3 and 15 percent. The Union Bank also extended credit to the commercial banks, rediscounting at between 2 and 4 percent.

In an attempt to control inflation, reserve requirements for demand deposits were changed in August 1957 from 8 to 16 percent and in July 1961 were raised again to 20 percent. The requirements for time deposits changed from 3 to 6 percent in 1957 and to 7½ percent in 1961. These changes, however, had little effect on either the volume or direction of commercial bank lending. In 1962 nearly 90 percent of commercial bank advances were directed to trade and manufacturing, and there was virtually no lending to the agricultural sector. The banks were required to hold half of their reserves in the form of government securities.

Apparently anticipating the limited control it could exert over the scope and direction of commercial bank lending, the government had established the State Commercial Bank in 1954. Although a number of Burmese-owned banks had been established

after independence, they were quite small and seemingly contributed little to development needs. The State Commercial Bank gradually absorbed a large percentage of commercial bank transactions. Some of its increased share of commercial banking came from private depositors, but the greater part of the increase lay in the constantly widening scope of government activities. Particularly since the advent of the Ne Win government in 1962, steps such as the nationalization of internal and foreign trade activity resulted in an enormous increase in government bodies, boards and corporations, many of which maintained accounts with the State Commercial Bank, as well as with the Union Bank. In 1963 the 32 branches and 3 suboffices of the State Commercial Bank were handling roughly half of the total commercial banking business in the country.

The definitive step in bringing commercial bank policy into line with the government's need for systematic planning under Burmese socialism was the nationalization of commercial banks, both foreign- and Burmese-owned, in February 1963, after the return of military government under General Ne Win. All commercial banks were henceforth to be numbered serially as People's Banks. At the time of nationalization the 10 Burmese banks had a capital value of K10.3 million, deposits of K192.9 million and had issued loans of K161.8 million. The 14 foreign-owned banks were capitalized at K13.4 million, had deposits of K444.2 million and had made advances of K353.2 million. The government undertook to compensate the amount of subscribed capital and fixed assets of the banks within a 3-month period. Foreign banks were to be repaid the capital which they had brought into Burma in the original foreign currency.

Many banks amalgamated their branches after nationalization to reduce overhead, and the number of commercial bank offices was reduced by at least one-third in the first year. Since nationalization the volume of business transacted by the commercial banks, or People's Banks, fell steadily. Reflecting the increasingly restricted scope of private business, with government assuming a dominant role in nearly every sector of the economy, private demand deposits declined by one-fifth between 1963 and 1964 and by 30 percent between 1964 and 1965. Time deposits declined also, as did the number of check clearings. In the first year after nationalization, advances to the private sector declined by nearly half.

In 1966, however, the level of demand deposits recovered somewhat, perhaps indicating that the economy had begun to adjust to the nationalizations. The increased level of these deposits may also reflect the paucity of private investment opportunities within

the country, which left would-be investors with few alternatives other than to increase their cash holdings.

The Union Bank continued to exercise control over the nationalized banks through the manipulation of reserve requirements. When the banks were nationalized the Union Bank changed the reserve requirement for demand deposits from 20 to 8 percent and the requirement for time deposits from 7.5 to 3.5 percent. The purpose given for changing the requirement was to free the banks' resources for lending to the government.

On July 1, 1966, all banking was brought under central control. All of the People's Banks were amalgamated under one management. Only 10 banks had survived the decline in commercial banking, and they became functional branches of the Union Bank, each handling specific types of banking. One bank takes care of government ministerial accounts, another the accounts of government boards and corporations. Three banks handle private current accounts, and two handle private savings accounts. Finally, one bank handles industrial finance. The State Commercial Bank is responsible for financing foreign trade.

OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

A number of specialized financial institutions were established after independence to serve the needs of specific sectors of the economy. The State Agricultural Bank, founded in 1953, provides direct loans to cultivators through its village bank branches. In 1961 the State Agricultural Bank had 25 major branches and operated more than 2,000 village banks. The Bank distributes loans on a sown-acreage basis for specific crops. The State Agricultural Marketing Board supplements the activities of the Agricultural Bank to granting loans at harvest time. The Agricultural Resources Development Corporation is devoted to financing the cultivation of crops deemed particularly important for agricultural growth. In the 1960's the Corporation was advancing funds for the development of jute and peanuts. It is possible that these various types of agricultural credit have been subsumed under the agricultural branches of the People's Bank since the centralization of banking in 1966.

An Industrial Development Corporation was established in 1961 to assist the establishment of private industry. Since the nationalization of large and small industry in 1964, however, there has been little indication of the functions being performed by the Industrial Development Corporation, but it probably acts as a conduit of government funds to the nationalized industries.

The government had assumed control over most pawnshops in the early 1950's, and it appeared by the mid-1960's that these

pawnshops had made effective inroads on the unorganized money-lending market, particularly those small private pawnshops still in the hands of Chinese. Private pawnshop operators were going out of business because of a lack of finance and because of taxes and fees levied by the government.

THE MONEY SUPPLY

Beginning in 1931 the value of currency that circulated in the country was fixed in terms of British sterling, which determined its value in all other currencies. After World War II most countries of the British Commonwealth belonged to a system of international settlements called the Sterling Area. Although Burma did not join the Commonwealth, much of its foreign trade was conducted with Commonwealth countries, and it did join the Sterling Area. Payments between Sterling Area members were settled in sterling, and payments to nonmembers were settled through a system of external accounts which represented the pooled nonsterling foreign exchange resources of all members. As a member of the Area, Burma was expected to hold large amounts of its external reserves in sterling but enjoyed certain privileges in having access to London's capital and money markets, as well as the London gold pool.

In 1966 the Burma Government withdrew from the Sterling Area. The reason given was that the government desired a greater degree of financial independence in international transactions than obtained under Sterling Area regulations. It wished to hold a greater percentage of its reserves in gold and currencies other than sterling. Fear of a devaluation of sterling may also have been a factor in the government's decision to withdraw.

At the time of withdrawal the foreign reserves of the country stood at K969 million, of which K398 million were in gold. The Union Bank held K862 million of the country's foreign assets, and the People's Banks held K107 million. Nearly 40 percent of the currency was backed by foreign exchange.

Although the official rate of exchange has remained fairly stable at K4.76 to the dollar, a black market in currency has indicated that the kyat's real value has declined. The black market grew out of increasing government debt as the government's expenditures on defense and internal order increased. Hedging against the kyat became a national affair. Restrictions on Chinese and Indian enterprises resulted in a significant flight of capital in 1962, and intermittently declining exports further undermined confidence in the currency. Gold and other currencies were exchanged against the kyat at a rate between K8.75 and K20.0

to the dollar. Total illicit currency and gold imports in 1964 were estimated at about K100 million.

The internal money supply consists of currency in circulation and demand deposits. It follows a seasonal fluctuation based on the cycle of the rice harvest. Currency and credit begin to expand in December at the beginning of the harvest season, rise to a peak in April and begin to fall in June. The major factor in this seasonal fluctuation is the level of credit offered to farmers and rice millers. Government activities have nearly obliterated credit formerly extended by the private sector. Before nationalization of foreign and internal trade commercial banks had been important in providing funds to rice millers and in financing exports. Since the nationalizations these functions have been assumed by the government. Before 1964 government loans to cultivators had been extended through the media of the commercial banks, but since then they have been channeled through the State Agricultural Marketing Board and other agricultural institutions.

As a result of the greatly expanded program of government credit to agriculture the money supply has increased by a large margin since the early 1960's (see table 16). The increase lay in currency in circulation, since demand deposits fell after the nationalization of commercial banks and foreign and internal trade. The largest increase in a single year came in 1963, when the government allotment of agricultural loans was doubled.

Table 16. Money Supply in Burma, 1960-65
(in millions of kyats ¹)

	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
Currency in circulation.....	1,050	1,090	1,170	1,640	1,760	1,812
Demand deposits	794	737	899	778	521	514
Total money supply ²	1,844	1,827	2,069	2,418	2,281	2,326

¹ K4.76 equal US\$1.
² All figures seasonally adjusted averages.

Source: Adapted from *Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbooks*, 1964, 1965, 1966 and 1967.

For a number of reasons this rapid increase in the money supply has not, however, led to serious inflation. The government's assumption of control and operation of most aspects of the economy has limited the scope of private spending. The velocity of circulation of money, or the number of times that a given monetary unit changes hands, was very low in the mid 1960's, since many transactions that formerly took place in the private sector were simply recorded as intergovernment transfers.

The only major sector of the economy still largely in private

hands was agriculture, the sector which has received the largest amount of funds in government credit. The high level of loans to agriculture, however, did not lead to significant inflation in rural areas. There were few consumer goods available for farmers to purchase, and prices of those goods available were strictly controlled in the government-run shops, which had a virtual monopoly of most internal trade (see ch. 22, Domestic Trade.)

The partial decontrol of trade in some items, notably dried fish and cooking oil, that occurred in late 1966 had not made any measurable impact on the general cost of living by mid-1967. The general shortage of consumer goods, sometimes encompassing even basic necessities, resulted from the dislocations and bottlenecks in the distribution system, which in 1967 had not yet begun to function efficiently after nationalization in 1964. A black market in consumer goods was assuming serious proportions, but it was hoped that the partial liberalization of trade would eventually eliminate illicit trading activity.

With few outlets for their money, farmers were directing surplus funds to Post Office savings accounts and Post Office Savings Certificates. In December 1965 total postal savings stood at K562.5 million, an 86 percent increase over 1961.

In May 1964 the government issued an edict to the effect that bills of K50 and K100 denomination would no longer be acceptable legal tender. The measure was aimed at alleged hoarding of large denominations, particularly by persons who engaged in speculative trading or smuggled currency into foreign black markets. Every person initially was to be reimbursed for bills held up to a total of K500 by currency of smaller denominations. This sum was later changed to a total of K4,200. Bills held by workers and farmers were to be reimbursed in full, however. The demonetization resulted in the withdrawal of almost half the currency then in circulation, but the money supply soon rose to previous levels.

THE STATE BUDGET

Before the Ne Win government came to power, separate budgets were maintained for four different levels of government. The Union, or central government, administered the various ministries traditional to most governments, such as defense, public works, health, agriculture and education. Secondly, the four constituent states had separate budgets dealing with those functions which, under the Constitution, the governments of the states were permitted to handle. Local units of government, primarily incorporated municipalities, had their own small administrative budgets. Finally, the extraministerial boards and corporations, such as the

Electricity Supply Board and Agricultural Development Resources Corporation, which handled economic activities assumed by the government in its pursuit of a socialist economy, maintained budgets separate from the Union government.

The Ne Win government, in attempting to foster a greater degree of unity in the country, in 1964 incorporated these separate budgets into one, all-encompassing financial statement, the State Budget. Many functions formerly permitted the states were assumed by the Union government. The State Budget did indicate the revenue and expenditures of local government bodies, ministries and boards and corporations, but the consolidated budget in reality worked to integrate the financial requirements of all of these units.

The activities of boards and corporations, greatly expanded after the nationalizations of trade, industry, mining and banking, accounted in the 1966–67 State Budget (the Burmese fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30) for 84 percent of total government expenditures and for 78 percent of total internal receipts. Although the finances of the boards and corporations are dealt with within the State Budget, and each of these agencies maintains a loose connection to a specific ministry, their financial affairs are supposed to be conducted on an independent business basis, and most of them ultimately are expected to become self-sustaining. Their financial positions and requirements vary widely. A few are highly profitable; others are in the developmental stage but may be expected ultimately to become self-sustaining; still others will require public support indefinitely.

A distinction is made in the State Budget between current and capital expenditures and receipts. Capital expenditures correspond roughly to government activities undertaken for development purposes and have been the major vehicles for the implementation of the various government development plans (see ch. 18, Character and Structure of the Economy). Although specific information on the 1967–70 Four Year Plan drawn up by the Ne Win government was unavailable in 1967, the capital expenditures of the 1966–67 State Budget were understood to encompass many of its general aims.

Expenditure

Government expenditures have shown a constant increase since independence. Before the nationalizations of the Ne Win government ordinary central government expenditures doubled between 1952 and 1962. The last U Nu government budget set expenditures at K1,269 million. The 1966–67 State Budget, including all of the government's newly assumed activities, listed ex-

penditures of K11,333.7 million, representing a twelvefold increase over that of the 1962 budget.

Total current expenditure for 1966–67 was estimated at K9,998.4 million. Current expenditures for ordinary government activities under the ministries in 1966–67 came to K1,385.1 million, of which one-third was devoted to defense. Other important current expenditures were on social services and administration. Current expenses of local units of government stood at K54.4 million. The boards and corporations listed current expenses at K8,558.9 million. Trading activities of these agencies, including both domestic and foreign commerce, accounted for 68 percent of their expenditures. Industry and agriculture accounted for 20 percent, construction for 4.5 percent and transportation and communication for 4.3 percent.

Capital expenditures in 1966–67 stood at K1,335.5, compared to K801.5 million a year previous. Board and corporation expenditures again were the most important, nearly 70 percent. Central government expenditures were K391.7 million, and local government expenditures were K23.3 million.

A functional classification of 1966–67 capital expenditures was not available, but the figures for the previous year give some indication of the focus of development expenditure. In that year agriculture was the largest single item, receiving 20 percent of capital funds. Industry followed with 18 percent, and transportation with 16 percent. Public works and roadbuilding received 9 percent of capital funds; mines, 6 percent; and social services, 5 percent.

Revenue

Revenue from domestic sources stood at K12,032.9 million, an increase of approximately 16 percent from the previous year. Nearly four-fifths of internal revenue came from the receipts and earnings of boards and corporations. These public agencies meet their expenditures in various ways. Earnings on current account, direct advances, loans and subsidies by the government and borrowing from the banking system are the most important methods of finance. The most important self-sufficient agency is the State Agricultural Marketing Board, whose profits from trading rice, both internally and in foreign trade, provide a major source of government revenue.

Tax receipts of about K2,150 million in 1966–67 were the second largest source of revenue, with taxes on income bringing in the highest portion, approximately K1,414.6 million. Income taxes include taxes levied on both individuals and on business enterprises. Taxes are levied on government-run businesses, the boards

and corporations, as well as on those few enterprises remaining in private hands.

The Ne Win government consolidated personal income tax, a surtax on personal income, and business taxes, into a single income tax in 1964. Incomes of less than K4,200 were exempt from taxation, and a deduction of K400 per child was permitted. The rates on personal income prevailing before the consolidation ranged from 7 percent of the first K3,500 of taxable income to 32 percent on incomes above K15,000. A surtax on incomes above K25,000 was set at 18 percent, rising to 66 percent on incomes over K300,000. The effective rate of taxation on businesses, including income and excess profits taxes, had been approximately 58 percent.

The most important indirect tax was customs revenue, which stood at about K4,742 in 1966–67. Customs revenues had fallen somewhat with a decline in imports attendant upon nationalization of foreign trade (see ch. 23, Foreign Economic Relations). Other taxes include excise taxes, land taxes, taxes on forest extractions, fisheries, rubber production and a state lottery.

The 1966–67 budget also listed K180 million revenue from foreign sources. Japanese reparations payments accounted for K70 million of this sum. Other important contributions, primarily in the form of loans, came from Communist China, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United States, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia (see ch. 23, Foreign Economic Relations).

The Public Debt

Since public debt transactions are included within the budget itself, the conventional budget deficit represents only part of the overall deficit. In the 1966–67 State Budget, total revenue and expenditure figures indicated a surplus of K19.3 million, but in reality this masked an increase in the public debt of approximately K780 million. The public debt is represented by government borrowings from the banking system, primarily the Union Bank. Even before nationalization, commercial bank lending to the government had been negligible. The postal savings system also contributes to some degree to government finance, and government borrowings from the system are counted as part of the public debt. Temporary advances from boards and corporations are also made in the form of interest-bearing government securities.

From the close of World War II until the end of 1952, Burma's public debt was small and fairly stable. Since then it has risen rapidly, from K68 million in 1952 to K885 in 1956 and to K2,059

million in 1965. The bulk of the debt is held in short-term Treasury bills.

In November 1965 the Union Bank held K1,500 million of government securities. The remainder was held by the People's Banks and the boards and corporations. Except for money lent by these institutions, government borrowings, especially from the Union Bank, really represent a bookkeeping transaction creating funds for the government rather than a transfer of real wealth.

SECTION IV. NATIONAL SECURITY

CHAPTER 25

PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY

The preservation of internal order and security has been one of the major problems and concerns of the government since the country gained its independence in 1948. Continuing political unrest, marked by revolt and violence, has strained the capabilities of the security forces, drained economic resources and thwarted national cohesion and stability. Despite a religious and family tradition of respect for authority and adherence to social disciplines, the atmosphere of violence and rebellion has encouraged crime and brigandage and contributed to a manifest disrespect for law and order.

The roots of the chronic insurgency that still confronted the nation in 1967 go deep into the past and, in some respects, are a heritage of the country's confused and turbulent history. Aggressive opposition to the government has been fomented by a legacy of longstanding ethnic hostilities, tribal animosities and separatist aspirations of once-autonomous enclaves. In later years this has been further aggravated by Communist-inspired disaffection which has added a new obstacle to creating a united national entity. The result has been that not only the civil police but the armed forces have had to devote all their energies to the suppression of internal insurrections and upheavals in the hope of making it possible for the government to go ahead with a program of national growth and development.

Statistics on the incidence of crime are fragmentary and incomplete, but limited records available indicate a relatively high rate for the area. Crimes of violence, such as assault and homicide, were particularly prevalent in the mid-1960's, along with a disquieting frequency of armed robbery and larceny. Much of this could be attributed to the social tensions and instability resulting from political insurgency, but it reflected an outlook and environment that added a heavy burden on law enforcement agencies that were already hard pressed to cope with recurring threats to order and tranquillity. Also of concern was the penal and correctional system, which was antiquated and deficient in facilities and in operation.

Law enforcement is in the hands of the People's Police Force, a large centralized body responsible for the entire country, with the exception of Rangoon, which has its own metropolitan city police. The People's Police was established in 1964, the latest in a series of reorganizations since independence which had seen the creation, dissolution and redesignation of several national police units, such as the Union Constabulary and the Union Military Police. The police worked closely with the army, and in the past the transfer of personnel from one to the other and the periodic absorption of entire units made it difficult at times to distinguish one from the other. The formation of the new People's Police is an effort to set up and maintain a civil force that will be independent of the army and concern itself exclusively with the maintenance of law and order and the prevention and detection of crime.

In spite of a situation that appears discouraging on the surface, some progress is being made. Crime rates have been reduced somewhat from those of the final colonial years when World War II and the struggle for independence spurred a widespread wave of lawlessness. As in the battle against insurgency the government is meeting with some success and, barring unforeseen developments, should be able to maintain the momentum toward a sure, if gradual, improvement in achieving an acceptable degree of order and safety.

SOCIAL CONTROLS

The country's social environment with respect to human behavior has been described as permissive in nature. The people pride themselves on the tolerance of their formal religion and, in general, are loath to judge their fellow man. Burmese culture tends to recognize human frailty and tolerates a certain degree of human error in its interpretation. Although laws and statutes do exist, they are not often rigidly applied, relying rather on the Buddhist credo that inexorable natural laws will in themselves punish the malefactor.

This reluctance to judge another is reflected in a general unwillingness to criticize an offender openly, whether one against an individual or against society itself. It is a suppression that can create a misleading picture of harmony and accord, while inner conflicts ferment and become acute. Such repressions can reach a point where they result in a sudden explosion whose roots are not immediately discernible. It is this characteristic that has contributed to the reputation of the Burmese as being unpredictable and highly volatile.

There are numerous examples in recent history of the so-called explosive Burmese character, a striking one being the Saya San rebellion against the British in 1930 and 1931. Although poorly organized and mystically oriented, it was a spontaneous eruption of suppressed grievances that spread swiftly through the countryside and brought thousands of poorly armed villagers into violent conflict with police and military forces. It was put down without much difficulty, but the fanatical tenacity of the rebels both surprised and shocked the authorities. This same pattern is reflected in the individual, and sudden and unexpected violence is a common characteristic of Burmese criminal behavior.

Since precolonial times codes of justice have reflected a general attitude of tolerance, and arbitration rather than the imposition of strict and impersonal punishment has been the rule. One of the principal grievances against the colonial authorities was the British concept of justice, which imposed an inflexible code that appeared strange and inexplicable to the Burmese. The codes of the independent government have tried to blend the disparate values of the past. From a European point of view they are applied with utmost leniency, the courts seemingly reluctant to impose punishment except where the law has been outrageously violated.

The pattern for security was established for the most part under British administration. For 1,000 years before that the Burman had lived under a legal system based entirely on custom; there were no legislative bodies, no executive orders from the monarch and no regular police forces. At the beginning of each reign the king proclaimed a list of crimes and their accompanying punishments; as each ruler had his own standards, these varied widely over the centuries, although they always included the familiar felonies, such as treason, murder, robbery and the like.

Courts, which were conducted entirely according to customary law, were located throughout the country, their levels conforming to the loose administrative organization of the country into provinces, cities, towns and villages. Viceroys, governors or headmen dealt with local criminal offenses, and a supreme court, headed by the king or crown prince, was the final court of appeal and arbiter of justice. The principal characteristic of these courts was that they provided litigants an opportunity for arbitration, and the system instilled in the people a tendency to settle disagreements peacefully.

With the establishment of British rule, jurisprudence and law enforcement were soon centralized, with the resultant loss of influence and prestige for both the monkhood and hereditary chiefs. The colonial authorities imposed a Western concept of order based

on the rule of law, rather than relying on the traditional authority of monks and headmen under the body of customary law, which the British found indefinite and confusing. The introduction of these new legal concepts was upsetting to the traditional system and led to much confusion as to the application of the law under the new regime.

In the villages the new order caused deep-rooted changes, converting them from social to administrative units; hereditary chiefs became officials of the central government, with a loss of personal authority, which now derived solely from the central administration. With the weakening of communal bonds, established traditions were increasingly ignored, and offenses against both criminal and customary law rose steadily.

Individualism and lack of respect for authority, combined with an explosive temperament, have prolonged lawlessness; individual crime is still high, and bandit groups still roam outlying areas. Since independence, however, the distinction between politically motivated insurgents and ordinary bandits often has been difficult to determine. Ethnic tensions have increased, and efforts at "Burmanization" have sometimes led to revolt and separatism. Although the government has met with some successes in its battle against lawlessness, there is still a formidable fight ahead if the country is to achieve a regime of internal order and security.

THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

In 1967 the judicial system was still in a period of transition and development and had not yet come into sharp focus. The socialistic orientation of the government had resulted in a new emphasis on economic offenses that had somewhat expanded the scope of criminal law, reflecting the regime's concern for the success of its socialist programs. The introduction of this new factor created an atmosphere of innovation and experimentation in legal routines and processes as there had not as yet been time to establish a firm doctrinal balance.

Although many changes and amendments had been effected in the structure and operation of the judicial system, the authority of the judiciary still rested with the Constitution; though not technically in force, its provisions were still the only guide to the functioning of courts and the activities of the magistrature. Traditional courts still handled litigation concerned with religious or customary law, but they had no jurisdiction in criminal matters, which were subject to the body of statutory law introduced by the British.

The young radicals and revolutionaries who framed the Constitution tried to establish a judiciary that would be independent

but that also would be responsive to the new socialist-oriented philosophy of government. Proclaiming the rule of law as a beacon, they tried to ensure that the appointment, tenure and retirement of judges should not be dependent on administration, party or any individual. These safeguards still remain in the Constitution and are reflected in a number of judiciary acts as well. Although not always scrupulously observed, they have for the most part achieved their aims, and the magistrature is largely an independent, principled and highly respected group.

The system of criminal jurisprudence is, in effect, the one introduced in colonial times by the British. Criminal codes and procedures go back to British origins, and the changes that have been effected have been fundamentally rooted in British precedents. The entire judicial framework is under the jurisdiction of the minister for judicial affairs, and the attorney general, who is not a minister, acts as principal legal adviser to the government. The country's senior magistrate is designated chief justice of the Union and presides over the highest court, whatever its designation. The post of minister for judicial affairs was held by the Revolutionary Council, General Ne Win, until late 1963, when it was handed over as an additional duty to the minister for home affairs.

Criminal Codes

The country's statutory laws were first codified and published in 1898 as The Burma Code. The British, after their occupation in 1886, had found local customary law too indefinite and unwieldy for sound and uniform administration and set about to conform to the juridical patterns of their other colonial territories. Gradually, the statutory laws that had been designed on British Common-law models for use in India were extended to Burma, using the original Indian Penal Code of 1860 and adopting the Indian Criminal Procedure Code of 1898. Upon publication they became the law of the land and have remained in force, with necessary amendments, up to the present time.

The Burma Code is a compilation of all statutory laws and includes acts and regulations governing various other judicial activities, such as police and prisons. It runs to over 10 volumes, those after Volume X being concerned with the laws applicable to the states and the special division. Under separate titles The Code contains the Penal Code, which appears in Volume VIII, and the Criminal Procedure Code, which is in Volumes IV and VIII. Changes and amendments are published annually, and complete revised editions of The Code are brought out periodically as the situation requires.

The Penal Code, as incorporated in The Burma Code, is comprehensive and modern. Supplementary legislation over the years has kept it up to date, but it remains basically the penal code in force during the colonial era. Its subsections deal with the competence of the law, categories of offenses and criminal responsibility, and types and limits of punishments. One section is concerned with offenses relative to the armed forces; it includes such infractions of military law as insubordination and desertion, and the section serves as the basis for military justice.

There are two general levels of offenses recognized by the code; felonies, or serious crimes, and misdemeanors, or minor infractions. Criminal responsibility is precisely defined and takes into account possible extenuations and mitigating factors, such as self-defense or impairment of mental faculties. Ignorance of the law is not considered an excuse, but intoxication, if involuntary, may be a moderating factor. Children under 7 years of age are not held criminally responsible for any act or omission, and penalties for minors between 7 and 12 are considerably less severe than normally prescribed.

The code groups various classifications of offenses into broad categories, which, in turn, are broken down into specific types of violations. The major categories distinguish between crimes against the state; against public tranquillity; against persons or property; and against public health, safety and morality. Other broad areas include offenses against public justice, public servants, coins and stamps, marriage and religion. Finally, there are brief sections specifically covering defamation, intimidation, insult and annoyance.

Crimes against the state include such offenses as treason, rebellion and armed insurrection. Crimes against public tranquillity take in unlawful assembly, affray, riot and the like; those against persons and property involve the more conventional types of lawbreaking, such as homicide, assault, robbery, rape and abduction. The categories covering morality and religion are concerned with a wide variety of offenses ranging from obscenity and indecent exposure to malicious outraging or defiling of places of worship.

Punishments are treated in some detail in the code, and although courts have some degree of latitude the range of penalties is carefully defined. Recognized punishments include the death penalty; transportation, which is exile to a penal colony; fine and imprisonment, which may be rigorous, that is, at hard labor, or simple. The code also authorizes whipping with a rod under certain circumstances, but in 1967 there were strong, if indefinite, indications that this form of punishment had been abolished.

Felonies are those crimes that are subject to punishment by imposition of the death penalty or by imprisonment for a term of 3 years or more. Other offenses are classified as misdemeanors. Lesser misdemeanors are usually redressed by a fine but may draw short terms of confinement in cases of repeated violations or where the offender has a history of incorrigibility. Imprisonment implies incarceration at a formal correctional facility, normally a local jail or prison.

There is little recent information on current transportation practices, but in the past condemned prisoners were transported to detention facilities set up on remote offshore islands. Exile at one of these penal institutions could be substituted for a prison sentence, usually at a reduced term. In cases of action or altercation between parties the courts encourage arbitration, and every effort is made to reach a solution by arranging an acceptable payment, compensation or restitution between litigants.

The Criminal Procedure Code prescribes the competence of the various types of court, specifies the functions and responsibilities of judicial officials, outlines rules of evidence and regulates the conduct of preliminary proceedings and trials. Minor offenders are prosecuted by complaint, and major crimes by indictment, but there is no grand jury. The system of bringing offenders before the bar of justice closely follows British practice.

Minor offenders are brought directly before a lower court magistrate, who prepares charges and issues a summons to the accused; major cases are referred to the Attorney General's Office, which determines jurisdiction and venue. The attorney general remands the case to the appropriate court, which draws up charges based on the evidence submitted and arranges to place the case on the docket. The procedure code provides for the use of writs of habeas corpus and for the arrangement of bail at the discretion of the court.

Inferior courts are summary in nature, with a single magistrate weighing a case and passing judgment. He is sometimes assisted by assessors, who are lay advisers; they may make recommendations, but their opinions are not binding on the court. The use of assessors is rare in criminal cases, although they are customary in traditional courts trying civil litigation. Higher level courts employ juries and, occasionally, assessors. Juries are usually composed of nine members, who may be men or women. In their selection each side is entitled to challenge for cause and is permitted eight peremptory challenges.

The conduct of trials at a superior tribunal follows a rigidly prescribed routine which closely parallels British procedure. The law specified an open and public court. The determination of

jurisdiction and venue and the preparation of charges are considered preliminaries of trial. Commencement of proceedings starts with the arraignment of the accused and the entering of pleas. The jury is then selected, and the court proceeds to the trial itself.

Both prosecution and defense may make opening statements before the examination of witnesses. The complainant testifies first, presenting his witnesses and any other evidence to support his case. During the process the defendant or his advocate may question any of the witnesses. At the conclusion of the evidence for the prosecution the accused is advised that he may make an unsworn statement or may testify under oath, subject to cross-examination. The defendant's testimony is followed by that of any defense witnesses, and this is followed by closing statements. The court is then adjourned as the jury retires to consider its verdict. Upon completion of its deliberations court is reconvened to announce the findings, and the accused is either released or sentenced.

An unusual feature of The Burma Code is the inclusion of a comprehensive tabulated schedule which presents in condensed form basic information relative to virtually all recognized criminal offenses. A table identifies each offense by the section of the Penal Code in which it is treated, and succeeding columns indicate to various applicable factors. These include: whether arrest may be made without a warrant, whether bail is permitted, what maximum punishment applies, what level of court normally has jurisdiction, and whether the offense is compoundable, that is, can prosecution be withheld for a consideration. The table facilitates many legal preliminaries and is particularly helpful in a country where the competence level of the legal profession and bar is not of the highest.

Criminal Court Structure

The court system, like the administrative structure of the government, has undergone radical change since the assumption of power by the Ne Win government in 1962. The former Supreme and High Courts, which had been fixtures of the judicial framework since colonial times, were dissolved in 1962 and their judicial powers delegated to a Chief Court and a number of special lower courts. The Union Chief Court, composed of six magistrates appointed by the Revolutionary Council, is now the country's final arbiter in questions of law and fact, and in criminal matters it is the final court of appeal.

Below the Chief Court there are three types of tribunal, either appellate or trial courts with original jurisdiction in criminal

actions. They are designated Courts of Appeal, Special Criminal Courts and Primary People's Courts. All three are new types of tribunals introduced by the Revolutionary Council and, in addition to their normal judicial functions, are specifically charged with safeguarding the country's socialist economy.

Although there were courts of appeal before the coup of 1962, these were abolished, and a new Court of Appeal was established in August 1964. This court was designed to handle cases judged according to a new law enacted the previous March which was aimed at preventing interference with the building of a socialist economy. Shortly thereafter a second Court of Appeal was formed, specifically to review cases tried by the new Special Criminal Courts. In order to decrease the anticipated workload, however, provision was made for a Confirming Board to first review these cases and, possibly, to obviate the necessity for action by the Court of Appeal itself.

Special Criminal Courts are located in most principal towns and cities and have original jurisdiction in cases involving felonies and serious crimes. Although considerable emphasis has been placed on offenses against socialist economic development, these courts are primarily concerned with the more conventional criminal actions. Composed of three magistrates, they may impose any legally recognized punishment. Appeals from their findings are channeled through a Confirming Board to a Court of Appeal, if necessary, and thence, in rare criminal cases, to the Chief Court.

The first Primary People's Court was not established until January 1966. Starting with Rangoon and Mandalay, they have been spreading steadily throughout the divisions and in mid-1967 were found in most localities. They have largely taken over the functions of the former justices of the peace and handle misdemeanors and minor infractions. Here again, though, special emphasis has been placed on violations of the socialist economic laws, and much of their activity is concerned with blackmarketing, illegal handling of controlled consumer goods and the like. The court, which is summary in nature, is limited, however, to cases where the goods involved do not exceed K500 (K4.76 equal US\$1) in value.

In connection with the activities to protect the socialist economy the government formed a number of Investigating Groups to detect violators and hand them over to the Primary People's Court. Each group is headed by a representative of the government's Security and Administrative Committee and includes a local elder and a police officer. Operating primarily in urban centers the groups have wide authority to question suspects and

even search their premises. They are enjoined, nevertheless, to avoid legal action if the situation can be remedied by a reprimand, in cases of minor violations, or by confiscation of the goods involved. Appeals from any court or group decision concerned with economic infringement may be submitted to the local Security and Administrative Committee as well as to the area Special Criminal Court.

The national court system slowly has been spread to the outlying states that for years resisted centralization in the judicial field. Before 1965 only Kachin State had participated to any extent in the country's unified judicial administration. Shan State, the last territory to be included, entered the system in October 1965. By 1967 national courts were found in all areas and were gradually receiving increased acceptance and widening their fields of activity.

NATIONAL POLICE SERVICE

The People's Police Force, organized under the Ministry for Home Affairs, consists of the Burma Civil Police and the Rangoon City Police. Headed by a director general, who is an army officer appointed by the Revolutionary Council, it had a strength of over 40,000 men in mid-1967 and constituted a centralized force responsible for law and order on a nationwide basis. Formed in 1964, it assumed the responsibilities of the former Union Constabulary, which was absorbed into the army, and consolidated the country's numerous and farflung civil police forces. Although army officers occupied most of the senior posts and, thus, largely continued to dominate the force, the establishment of People's Police marked the first time there had been a civil police independent, at least in theory, from the military establishment.

The mission of the police force is to maintain law and order, preserve the peace, protect life and property, prevent and detect crime and apprehend offenders. Police headquarters is in Rangoon, from where it determines policy, supervises operations and directs the activities of subordinate units. The director general, assisted by a vice director general, reports directly to the minister for home affairs. The Police Council, made up of ranking police, army and Cabinet officials, is the senior government policy body with respect to police affairs and serves in an advisory capacity to the force under the supervision of the minister.

Organization and Operation

The headquarters comprises the staff elements and special activities of the force, as well as the operational control mechanism for directing its outlying components. Its structure is simple

and direct, with two special departments and two principal staff sections. The two special activities are the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and the Special Intelligence Department. The Special Intelligence Department, which until 1964 was known as the Special Branch, is charged with intelligence and counter-intelligence activities concerned with Burmese citizens and with foreigners visiting or living in the country. It had a strength of some 500 men in 1967, about half of them operating in the Rangoon area and the rest at rural outposts throughout the country. The Criminal Investigation Department has primary responsibility for the detection and investigation of crimes and preparation of cases for trial. With a strength of approximately 1,300, it is composed of a Crime Bureau, a Scientific Bureau and a Railway Police Bureau.

The two headquarters staff subdivisions are the Supply and Finance Section and the Administration and Training Section. These handle all matters within their jurisdiction for the entire force on a nationwide basis. There is no operations element, and the chain of command to subordinate units in the field is direct from the office of the director general.

The Rangoon City Police, as one of the two principal components of the People's Police Force, is technically subordinate to central police headquarters. Its duties and responsibilities are limited, however, to the capital, and it is, in effect, an autonomous metropolitan force operating exclusively within the city and its environs. The City Police is headed by the director, Rangoon Division, and had a strength of approximately 3,700 officers and men in 1967. In addition to its normal law enforcement duties, it has a variety of other functions. These include responsibility for motor vehicle registration for the entire country, surveillance of foreigners and a responsibility shared with the navy for the security of Rangoon harbor. Other routine duties include the usual police activities associated with urban life, such as sanitation, traffic control and suppression of vice.

The Burma Civil Police comprises all the forces stationed throughout the country outside of the capital and constitutes the bulk of the national police strength. Estimated to number close to 35,000 men in 1967, its uniformed members are the patrolmen on beat and the country constables who protect people and property. Although its primary mission is the enforcement of law and order, the force guards government property and the residences of high officials and is often called on to assist in operations against insurgents.

The Civil Police is organized into 11 subordinate geographic regional sections corresponding to the seven administrative di-

visions of Burma proper and one for each of the constituent states, with the exception of Kayah State, which in mid-1967 had not as yet been brought into the organizational structure. Each division is headed by a director or vice director, and is subdivided into districts, subdivisions, stations and outposts. Much of the operational control of police activities is exercised by the army through its direction of local Security and Administrative Committee arrangements, which include police officials at the various levels.

Up to 1967 the attempt to separate the police from the army had not proved an unqualified success. The army still largely controlled the force, and most senior police officials were officers detached from the military service. The secondary position of the police had resulted in considerable acrimony and strained relations between the two services; there were objections to the imposition of army regulations on the police, complaints of low supply priorities and charges that the police were being subjected to continuing unfavorable publicity. A principal grievance was the alleged lack of army support to isolated police posts. It was true that numerous stations had been attacked, often resulting in casualties, while no support was forthcoming from the army. In most cases, however, this was because the army's lack of mobility made it impossible to reach the outposts in time.

The authorities were aware of these problems and deficiencies, and early 1967 saw significant signs of change and improvement in the position of the police. Integration of the better police units and individuals into the army had been halted, new and better equipment was issued, recruiting was stepped up and the new year's budget provided for increased police compensation and the construction of a new central headquarters and training academy. Police morale improved considerably and was reflected in more favorable press coverage and an encouraging new atmosphere of service and cooperation.

Conditions of Service

The average city police headquarters is adequate but far from luxurious. Usually housed in a frame building enclosed by a fence or barbed wire, it offers the most basic facilities for administration, supply storage and, sometimes, housing for policemen and their families. Most rural police posts are strictly utilitarian and rather primitive. They are generally a rustic fort-like compound, closely guarded and surrounded by barbed wire. Used for housing of the garrison, often including their families, they can be used as a defensive strongpoint if necessary. Mostly, however, they serve as base of operations for manning the unit's

fixed guard posts at critical buildings or installations and its constant area-surveillance patrols.

All but the remotest outlying posts are tied into the police radio communications net, an efficient system which links most police posts to headquarters in Rangoon. Stations are adequately supplied with transportation for the most part, and there are generally enough trucks, sedans, jeeps or motorcycles to meet local needs. Rural patrols are conducted mostly by vehicle, but the force also has over 50 patrol boats for covering the rivers and coastal areas.

Much of the police equipment currently in use originated with a United States aid program which was initiated in 1958 and continued until it was phased out in 1965. This was not a technical assistance program but, rather, financial guidance to help the police allocate a \$10 million loan credit extended by the United States. Although only \$8.8 million of the credit was used, it served to supply the force with needed arms, vehicles, uniforms and other equipment. Only one American technician was assigned to the program in Burma, but occasional teams were sent to the country on temporary duty to help in specific projects, such as setting up the communications net. As part of the program, 11 Burmese police officers were sent to the United States for advanced training between 1959 and 1962.

There is scant information on current police training activities. During the life of the United States aid program sizable quotas of specialists were sent to American police schools for instruction in supply, radio maintenance and antiriot duties. This ended, however, with the phasing out of the program. Some technicians are known to have been sent to police schools outside of the country, but there is no indication that this has continued. The more common practice has been on-the-job training in a man's unit of assignment. There is a Police Officers Academy in Mandalay which conducts annual courses for officer candidates and also has a course of advanced instruction for officers at the intermediate level.

With the formation of the People's Police Force a new grade structure was introduced effecting several changes in the earlier pattern. These changes were not radical, however, and the new grades continued to conform closely to the British precedents introduced in colonial times. Police ranks below the director level range from constable up to superintendent, normal advancement following a progressive course up through corporal, sergeant, station officer and inspector. Recent increases in pay have brought police compensation into line with equivalent army ranks, and

in 1967 it was at a level considered good by local standards and consistent with the country's economic level (see table 17).

Table 17. Grades and Maximum Monthly Pay of the People's Police Force of Burma, 1967

(in kyats *)

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Pay</i>
Director General	1,500
Vice Director General.....	1,400
Director	1,300
Vice Director	1,200
Superintendent	1,000
Deputy Superintendent	700
Inspector	300
Police Station Officer or Assistant Security Officer.....	200
Sergeant	110
Corporal	100
Lance Corporal	60
Constable or Rifleman.....	50

* K4.76 equal US\$1.

Police uniforms closely resemble British military wear for the tropics. Army khaki uniforms, with distinctive police insignia, are worn in the field and during the hottest months. For garrison duty or in towns enlisted police wear blue trousers with a bluish-grey angora shirt. Headgear may be either the beret or the wide-brim Gurkha hat; mounted men use plastic crash helmets. Non-commissioned officers wear their chevrons on the right sleeve only. Officers have a blue or khaki service coat and wear a peaked service cap which is changed for a beret for field duty. Both officers and noncommissioned officers are armed with a pistol, but patrolmen carry only a baton, unless they are issued other weapons in an emergency situation. The Metropolitan Division of the Rangoon City Police, that is, the city patrolmen, traffic police and motorcycle squads, have a distinctive uniform consisting of a white jacket worn with blue trousers or breeches.

The police have their own decorations, distinct from those of the military, although members of the force may be awarded any of the national orders. There are four medals specifically for police personnel (or firemen), one of which is exclusively for officers. They are given for gallantry, distinguished service or conspicuous devotion to duty. The two higher awards carry with them a monetary allowance, which is rated according to the rank of the individual receiving the award.

Related Intelligence Activities

During most of their history the country's intelligence and security services have contended with widespread insurgency and lawlessness, as well as complex border security problems. During the British period, the unit cost of the police force was three to four times greater than in India. The serious insurgency that developed immediately after independence necessitated a continuing heavy investment in security forces. Lingered popular apathy toward law enforcement and the police services continued as a holdover from the years of British rule when the police were looked on as the instrument of foreign domination. There was also considerable distrust, caused in part by occasional high-handed and arbitrary measures used by the police in combating insurgency.

With counterinsurgency requiring as much, if not more, effort than the control of ordinary crime, the country's police and security agencies have had to work closely together, and at times it has been difficult to distinguish between the two. A variety of intelligence-security organizations have come and gone on the national scene; missions and functions frequently have been duplicated, personnel has been arbitrarily transferred from one service to another and tensions and rivalries have developed from time to time that seriously hampered the effectiveness of the entire security apparatus.

Until the reorganization of 1964 the police force was virtually part of the army, and it was used as much for military actions against insurgents as it was for countering ordinary crime. The force's new status held out promise for eventual complete independence, but there were still links with past methods and concepts that continued to make claims on its attention.

In 1967 there were two national intelligence and security agencies whose functions were closely tied in with those of the police: the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB) and the Bureau of Special Investigations. Although they presumably had no responsibilities in the criminal field, there was an overlap of interests with the police that required close cooperation and sometimes joint action, particularly in the areas of subversion and insurgency.

The National Intelligence Bureau, created in 1964, is made up of the heads of the country's various intelligence and specialized security agencies—the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) of the Ministry of Defense, the Criminal Investigation Department and Special Intelligence Department of the Civil Police, and the Bureau of Special Investigations. Headed by the director of the MIS, the NIB is a component of the Central Security and Administrative

Committee of the Office of the Chairman of the Revolutionary Council. Its main function is the top-level coordination of the intelligence activities of the armed forces, the police and other civil agencies.

The Bureau of Special Investigations is directly under the office of the chairman of the Revolutionary Council. It was originally organized in 1951 to investigate corruption among political leaders and government employees, but this aspect of its mission appears to have been deemphasized or dropped. It currently is engaged mostly in investigating possible threats to the regime and running down suspected activity of a subversive or antigovernment nature.

THE PENAL SYSTEM

The country's prison administration is under the direction of the Ministry for Home Affairs. It is regulated by The Burma Code, which has a comprehensive section covering all phases of prison and prisoner activities. The system is loosely organized, however, and most detention facilities receive little central guidance or supervision. The Code provides for certain standards and procedures, but, in practice, there is scant observance of its directives. In 1967 there was a prison facility in most towns of any size, but most of them were primitive old buildings in poor repair and generally unsanitary and overcrowded.

There is almost no official publication of penal statistics, and, of the negligible amount put out by the government, virtually none reaches the outside world. Infrequent reports of questionable reliability give an indication but do not provide a clear or authoritative picture of the situation. The best available information indicated that there were close to 40 detention facilities in the country. Of these, there were approximately 10 central prisons, 20 district jails and 10 subjails, or guardhouses.

The central prisons were the largest and best equipped facilities and were found in the major cities and towns. They accommodated convicted felons from surrounding areas as well as from the city where they were located. The jails were generally used for prisoners convicted of minor offenses, with short terms. There was also one known reformatory for juvenile offenders. Called a training school, it was located in Rangoon. The country's average prison population was reported to consist of approximately 6,000 in any given month.

The central prisons in Rangoon and Mandalay were the most modern and extensive institutions. Both were large and secure but lacked conveniences or modern facilities, and conditions were described generally as poor. The rest of the prisons ranged from

the crudest single detention rooms to sizable city jails, but for the most part they were inadequate by modern standards. Construction of most consisted of a frame or log enclosure surrounded by a barbed-wire fence.

The Code and other legislation prescribed the treatment of prisoners and specified that imprisonment should be for rehabilitation as well as for punishment. Although there was no indication of the existence of any rehabilitation programs, the treatment of ordinary prisoners was generally good. Political prisoners fared in accordance with their threat to the regime in power, some getting preferential treatment while others were treated as common felons.

A holdover from the colonial past had been a system of classification of prisoners into four categories known as Class A or B, and "special" or "ordinary." Class A, which carried with it certain privileges and relative comfort, was reserved for highly placed political figures or foreigners. The "special" category was usually for prisoners of prominent or influential families, and the rigors of their incarceration were greatly eased by special treatment and access to amenities. Class B inmates and "ordinary" prisoners received no special consideration and were strictly bound by the regulations and routines of their place of confinement.

In 1964 it was announced that in the future there would be only one class of prisoners, and all would be treated alike. The previous categories were officially abolished, and, henceforth, there were to be no distinctions between prisoners, regardless of status, condition or position.

None of the country's penal institutions had workshops or handicraft facilities, and there were no teachers, social workers, vocational training instructors or assigned medical personnel. Nevertheless, in spite of their inadequacies Burmese jails compared favorably with most Southeast Asian penal facilities—the system appeared to be generally accepted by the people, and there was no evidence of dissatisfaction or militant crusades for change or improvement.

CHAPTER 26

THE ARMED FORCES

The defense forces of the Union of Burma consist of the army, navy and air force. The army, with a strength of approximately 120,000 men, is by far the predominant element of the armed forces and overshadows the other components. Command and staff organization is patterned on the British system, and the Ministry of Defense (formerly called the War Office), which controls the Defense Services, functions in the dual capacity of a government ministry and a military headquarters.

Since the country gained its independence in 1948 the armed forces have been almost continually committed to combatting insurrections of both communist and ethnic dissident concentrations. Over the years the army has emerged as an effective force that has provided a degree of national stability, although it has not been able to rid the country entirely of its chronic insurgency. The navy and air force are small and have a limited combat capability but, nevertheless, are often able to provide effective support to the army's operations.

The country is almost entirely dependent on outside aid for its armament and equipment, as well as for most of its military training. Both the United States and Great Britain have made significant contributions over the years to the development of the armed forces and continue to provide much of the needed assistance. Material, however, has not been at a high level of sophisticated weaponry, and the unbalanced forces have operated primarily as light infantry with negligible supporting arms and services. As a result, despite long involvement in guerrilla-type operations, the military establishment has had little experience in conventional warfare.

The armed forces are maintained entirely on a volunteer basis except for the conscription of a few needed doctors. The National Service Law, providing for universal military service, was enacted in 1959 but has never been implemented. Although budgetary limitations have been a consideration, conscription, in fact, has not been needed, as voluntary enlistments easily have maintained the forces at desired levels. The university at Rangoon and that at Mandalay each maintains a corps of student trainees, but other than this there is no organized reserve or reserve training pro-

gram. There is no overall mobilization plan, but one would actually be unrealistic, as any significant expansion of the armed services would be seriously restricted by shortages of equipment, facilities and qualified instructors.

Military service has received widely varying degrees of acceptance over the years, but by and large the army has been considered a desirable and respected career. During the later years of colonial rule the British instilled in the people a sense of pride in the armed forces that carried over and was, in fact, stimulated by independence. The serviceman as an individual is in a favored segment of the society, and his environment and conditions of service meet a relatively high local standard. Although his daily routine is arduous and he is frequently faced with the hazards of his calling, he has status, a degree of security and many amenities and advantages that would be difficult to achieve in civilian life.

THE MILITARY TRADITION IN NATIONAL LIFE

The country's military tradition combines aspects of its ancient monarchical heritage with the British forms and doctrines of its more recent colonial tutelage. Burma's history is filled with wars of rival kingdoms and dynastic strife. For centuries the Burmans of the central Irrawaddy Valley resorted to armed force to establish or maintain control over their immediate neighbors, and they even undertook protracted and more distant campaigns into China, India, and Siam. Militant nationalism was deeply rooted in their culture. Until as recently as 1886, when the British annexed Upper Burma, only the Burmans had ever ruled the country in its entirety; all the peoples in the area at one time or another had been subject to the Burman crown and for several hundred years had looked on the Burman court as the center of civilization.

Before the eleventh century there were two principal centers of power in the area; a Burman kingdom in the central valley between the Irrawaddy and Sittang Rivers, and a Mon kingdom in the southern delta region. The first significant unification of the country was effected in 1057, when Burman King Anawrahta conquered the rival Mons and brought virtually all of Burma under one rule. For the next 700 years the country's history was a turbulent one of local warfare, suppressed uprisings, occasional clashes with neighboring powers and rare periods of tranquillity.

The military forces had their victories, some of which are still remembered in poem and song, and they had their defeats, which are largely forgotten. The local nature of the operations and the predominance of victories gave the country a false sense of security. With few contacts with the outside world, there was no

incentive to spur improvement or modernization of its armed forces, and they, consequently, remained stagnant, blithely ignoring the progress being made in the rapidly changing world around them.

About the middle of the eighteenth century the Burmans began to be involved with the French and the British, who were attempting to cultivate trade relations with their country. In the continuing intermittent warfare between the Burmans and the Mons, the British sided with the Burmans, and the French supported the Mons. These clashes were, however, minor superficial contacts that were part of a worldwide power conflict that ranged from Asia to America and the Western Hemisphere. For the most part, the country remained sheltered in its relative isolation.

The eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries witnessed a series of Burman military successes that did much to consolidate the kingdom but in the end led to a confrontation with the West that was to have serious repercussions on the country's future. Under the strong ruler Alaungpaya (1752-60) and his immediate successors, Burma conquered and devastated Siam and destroyed its capital, Ayutthaya; it repelled a Chinese invasion, ravaged Manipur and gained control over Assam. This last campaign, however, finally brought the Burmans into contact with the outside world, for while they were expanding toward India from the east the British were extending their frontier to meet them from the west.

Unsuccessful efforts on the part of the British East India Company, starting in 1795, to establish diplomatic relations with the country led to aggravation of mutual ill-feeling and resulted in a number of petty frontier incidents. Alaungpaya's son refused to treat with the Company and repelled its friendly overtures, confident in the invincibility of Burman arms and failing to appreciate the Company's strength. Flushed with recent victories, the Burmans did not recognize their danger, and in 1824 their hostility brought about the first war with the British. The war ended in 1826 with the surrender of the two maritime provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim.

The Burmans did not profit from this experience. They continued to refuse the trading facilities demanded by the West and still hoped for a different outcome in a new test of arms. In these circumstances, further conflict was inevitable. In 1852 a trivial incident arose that brought about the dispatch of a British expedition to enforce redress. At the end of the year the successful British campaign resulted in the annexation of the delta provinces, Pegu and Martaban, which corresponded roughly to the former Mon kingdom of Pegu. The new conquest linked up

the previously seized provinces and cut off from the sea the Burman kingdom of Ava. The British thus were assured military and economic control over all that remained of Burma.

The next few years saw the country become a pawn of international intrigue as the British developed their holdings and the French became interested in the area as a key to the interior of China. A series of weak rulers permitted the country's military posture to deteriorate while embarking on negotiations with the French which made them vulnerable to British reprisals. Both to further their colonial aims and to counter the French, the British took strong action in 1885. Taking advantage of a dispute between the government of Burma and a British timber company operating in the area, they promptly sent in a sizable military expedition after an ultimatum had been ignored. After a brief and almost bloodless campaign, the king was taken captive and exiled to India and his territory annexed. On January 1, 1886, Burma, with a national history of some 1,000 years, ceased to be an independent nation and became a province of the British Indian Empire.

With British occupation of the country the Burman military tradition was interrupted and almost destroyed, and it was to be some years before its historic legacy was resumed. The immediate result of occupation was a period of relative tranquillity, during which Burman military forces virtually disintegrated. The British felt no need for a Burman army, and a couple of brigades of British and Indian troops were able to maintain order and protect the thinly inhabited frontier areas. Most of the far-scattered garrisons were made up of armed police rather than military formations, and even these were made up mostly of Indians, with a small percentage of Karens. In time the Burmans came to be looked on by the British as an obviously unmartial race, and by 1927 they were actually excluded from the army's regular military units.

There was, nevertheless, some participation in military activities during these years. In 1887 an engineer Company of Sappers and Miners was recruited among the Burmans and proved itself capable and resourceful. It continued for over 35 years. During World War I four battalions of Burmans were organized as the Burma Rifles and saw active duty in Mesopotamia and Palestine. They established an excellent combat record, but their lax discipline, high absence rate and belligerence toward other ethnic groups led to the decision to bar them from the regular forces.

When Burma was separated from India in 1937 a radical change took place in the attitude toward military service. National pride spurred a renewed interest in the country's armed forces and was

reflected in a gradual buildup of elements indigenous to Burma, both as officers and in the ranks. By the beginning of World War II, in addition to an engineer company, there were 10 regular rifle battalions and 4 territorial battalions in the army. One officer in 12 was a Burman, the others British; among the enlisted men, 1 in 5 was Burman, the rest being Indians, Karens and other tribal groups. These forces were among those which, under Japanese sponsorship initially revolted against the British in 1941-42 and, later, in 1945, as the Burmese National Army, joined forces with the British against the Japanese.

After the war the increase in Burman participation continued and was greatly stimulated by independence in 1948 and by the Karen rebellion of 1949. It has continued over the years, and by 1967, after several phases of development and reorganization, the services had become an intensely nationalistic force that was predominantly, Burman in makeup and outlook.

The prestige of military service has been increasing steadily, and some efforts are being made to promote a greater spirit of national unity by desegregating ethnic elements and absorbing racial minorities. The armed forces are trying to maintain the continuity of past tradition by emphasizing those unifying factors as can contribute to the country's solidarity and well-being. This is being done by channeling the divergent legacies stemming from its varied Asian and colonial backgrounds into a sense of dedication and service to the nation.

THE ARMED FORCES AND THE GOVERNMENT

The Constitution of the Union of Burma, adopted in 1947, provided the legal basis for the country's armed forces and vested in Parliament the exclusive right to raise and maintain a military establishment (see ch. 13, The Governmental System). The Constitution provided certain safeguards to ensure civilian control of the armed forces and incorporated provisions designed to prevent abuses of power. These restraints disappeared when the Constitution was suspended in effect by the Ne Win coup of 1962, but the Revolutionary Government has made some effort to adhere to the outward forms of delegated authority in the new organizational framework. With the chairman of the Revolutionary Council occupying the three major posts in the hierarchy, however, there is not much question as to where the real authority lies.

Command of the armed forces is channeled downward from the chairman of the Revolutionary Council through the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Defense and the chief of staff, Burma Defense Services. In theory, it is the minister of defense who exercises political and military control of the armed forces and

would, under normal circumstances, provide civilian supervision over military activities. He is advised by the Defense Council Executive Committee, the senior policymaking body of the government in matters of defense and security. Composed almost entirely of senior officers, it serves as a consultative group to advise on matters affecting the administration and operation of the armed forces.

Under the Constitution the authority to declare war had been vested in Parliament, with special powers provided the president and prime minister to meet emergency situations. There have been no indications of subsequent legislation to provide for such action under the new regime. With the powers held by the Revolutionary Government, however, it could be expected that the Revolutionary Council, if not the chairman himself, would assume this authority.

The development of the armed forces immediately after independence was facilitated by generous British aid in weapons, equipment and training. Much of this was in the form of grants, which for a time avoided a serious drain on the country's slim financial resources. Within two years, however, the socialist economic philosophy of the government, coupled with its avowed position of neutrality, dictated that no military assistance would be sought or accepted except on a reimbursable basis. Since that time, despite nominally token charges, defense costs have been an ever-increasing burden on the national economy.

The ratio of defense spending to the total cost of government is high, and sums devoted to military expenditures have been rising steadily, keeping pace with expanding national budgets. The government budget in kyats (the national monetary unit) for fiscal year 1966-67 indicated total expenditures of K1,210 million (K4.76 equal US\$1), of which K550 million were allotted to defense. This represented 45.5 percent of the overall budget. It compared with K534 million in 1965-66, which had been 51.3 percent of a national budget of K1,040 million, and K522 million in 1964-65, or 31.4 percent of the national total. Defense was the largest single item in the budget, which in 1966-67 devoted K251 million to education and K146 to agriculture.

The cost of government has been increasing steadily over the years; as late as 1958 the country's total outlay had been running in the vicinity of K140 million, of which one-third was being expended on military operations. It is deficit spending, as the country's revenues far from meet its obligations, and the government must depend on substantial foreign aid and financing to meet its commitments.

The number of men in military service is small in relation to the total population and amounts to less than 2 percent of the

able-bodied males. The withdrawal of this small number from normal civilian pursuits has not had any appreciable effect on the economy nor created any manpower shortages in agriculture or industry. The economy in fact profits somewhat from the service experience of the young men, as many are able to acquire skills that serve them in good stead upon their return to civilian life.

Any full-scale mobilization or significant increase in the size of the forces would involve an additional drain on resources that would be unacceptable except in the direst emergency. There is a sizable group of veterans of former service that would be available for callup in case of need, but there are no stockpiles of equipment or facilities to handle an enlarged force. In view of the dependence on foreign purchase and assistance from the outside, it appeared unlikely in 1967 that there would be much expansion of the armed forces beyond current levels.

MANPOWER

With over 200,000 young men reaching the military age of 18 each year, there is more than enough manpower to meet the country's military requirements. Except for the single category of doctors, the status and benefits offered by a military career have attracted enough volunteers to make conscription unnecessary; in 1967 it did not appear that universal compulsory service would have to be resorted to for some time to come. Although only about half of the eligible males are generally found fit for military service, this still leaves enough men available so that the selection of applicants is at times a difficult and painstaking process. Aside from ethnic considerations, which frequently complicate selection, a perennial problem is finding men with educational qualification and mechanical potential to train as technical specialists.

For years men from the minority groups were the mainstay of the Burmese forces, but recent policies have favored the acceptance of Burmans in increasing numbers. In 1967 they constituted a majority of the men in service, although there were still many of other ethnic affiliation, principally Karens, Chins and Kachins. Except for sizable defections at the time of the Karen revolt of 1949, minority contingents have performed creditably and have been among the best and most reliable troops in the national forces. The ethnic Burman tends to be individualistic, with an inherent distaste for regimentation and discipline. He, nevertheless, responds well to capable leadership, and in combat usually proves a courageous and effective soldier.

Procurement and Training of Officers

Procurement of officers is on the basis of voluntary application or recommendation from the ranks. Qualification requirements are high and limit the field of applicants to young men with good health and a better-than-average education. Candidates must be at least high school graduates between the ages of 18 and 25 and, in addition to physical qualification, must pass a rigid entrance examination. Most young officers entering the service since independence have been from urban middle-class families, and many are college graduates.

Two principal training facilities turn out officers for the three services, with all cadets receiving the same fundamental instruction before branching out into their respective specialties. The Defense Services Academy, patterned after United States service schools, has a 4-year course and is the professional school for regular officers. An Officer Training School conducts a 6-month course to train "emergency," or reserve officers and an additional limited number is selected from graduates of the University Training Corps, a program similar to the United States Reserve Officers Training Corps.

The Defense Services Academy is located at Maymyo, about 25 miles northeast of Mandalay. About 100 candidates are selected for admission each year, and approximately 50 percent are commissioned at the conclusion of the 4-year course. The school achieved academic university status in 1964 and is now authorized to confer bachelor degrees on its graduates. The first graduation under its new status took place in June 1966.

The Academy is the outgrowth of a training school begun under British auspices in accordance with a military agreement of 1947. Opened in 1948, it was originally staffed entirely by the British, who furnished commissioned and enlisted instructors from their military mission. In 1955 this school formed the nucleus of the Academy, which adopted its present name and moved to a new site at Lawksawk, some 70 miles south of Mandalay. Five years later it was moved to its present location. Now staffed entirely by Burmese, it has become the key training institution of the armed forces. Most graduates are commissioned in the army, but the school also provides the input of regular officers to the navy and air force.

Graduates of the Academy or training school who enter the army may be assigned directly to tactical units or go on to advanced training in one of several army technical schools. Those going into the navy or air force continue specialized training at either the Naval Training School or Flying Training School. Here they receive advanced instruction in their service specialties;

navy officers are qualified for shipboard duties, and air officers undergo instruction which qualifies them as pilots or trains them in other aircrew functions.

There are several levels of advanced professional training available, and most officers are able to attend either a senior troop school or staff college in the course of their careers. A variety of schools offer intermediate and higher level courses for platoon and company commanders, and there are several advanced branch schools for senior officers as well as staff-level war colleges. The Defense Services Staff College, which provides the most advanced training available to officers of the three services, has a 9-month curriculum for selected senior officers which includes administration, tactics, combined operations and government.

Procurement and Training of Enlisted Personnel

The strength of the armed forces has been increasing steadily since independence. Starting in 1948 with an army of 15,000 and a navy of 700 men, by 1960 the army was up to 85,000, the navy over 3,000, and the air force, activated in 1953, had reached 3,000. The current total of over 120,000 had been reached by 1965 and momentarily was stabilized at that level. Part of this augmentation was effected by the absorption into the regular service of various sizable corollary units, such as the Union Constabulary and territorial formations. For the most part, however, armed forces strength was built up and maintained by voluntary enlistments.

The National Service Law of 1959 was enacted not because of any need for conscription to maintain the forces at desired levels, but rather to ensure the availability of manpower in case of emergency. Under its provisions all citizens between the ages of 18 and 45, both male and female, are subject to compulsory military service for 2 years. Original plans called for military instruction to be combined with vocational training in order to qualify conscripts for employment in national civil works projects. As no procedures were formulated to implement the law, however, and it has never become effective, there is no clear indication of what forms and patterns conscription would follow.

Recruiting is handled by boards located at major cities and towns and by itinerant teams that periodically visit outlying rural population centers. Qualified candidates are selected on the basis of examination and personal interview. Terms of enlistment range from 4 to 6 years, with a commitment to remain in inactive reserve status for a specified period upon termination of the enlistment. As there is no reserve organization or program, however, this has not yet entailed any obligation.

Each service has its own stations for receiving recruits and conducting their basic training. The army has a number of recruit training depots, and the navy and air force have special installations that make up part of their school complexes. Basic training takes approximately 10 weeks, and this is usually followed by 15 weeks of specialized training, after which a man is given his permanent assignment. Later, he may be selected for advanced technical training or sent to a noncommissioned officer's school. All three services maintain schools for advanced training in their branch specialties and include administrative, technical and tactical instruction.

Graduates of the University Training Corps who do not go on to train for a commission may be appointed noncommissioned officers, and a number enter the service in this way. Most noncommissioned officers, however, came up through the ranks and are selected on the basis of experience and proven capability. Most of them are career men with several years of service, and the corps of noncommissioned officers generally constitutes one of the principal mainstays of the military establishment. There is, nevertheless, enough turnover and promotion to the commissioned ranks so that a shortage usually exists. Foreign training assistance has been sharply curtailed in recent years, and although small quotas continue to receive training in various foreign countries the number of qualified graduates is not enough to fill the services' vacancies.

MISSION AND ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMED FORCES

The army has a dual mission of defending the country's territorial integrity and assisting the police in preserving internal security. This entails the traditional military responsibility of maintaining a constant state of readiness to defend the nation and implement its military policies. The navy, in addition to defense of the national coastline and policing of territorial waters, is charged with patrolling the inland waterways and providing transport and tactical support to the ground forces. The air force mission is the air defense of the country and provision of air support to the army and navy.

Conditions since independence have permitted scant attention to the task of defending the country from outside attack, as the military forces have found it difficult to maintain minimum national stability and counter an endless succession of dissident uprisings. The services have been meeting these commitments effectively for years, and constant warfare has given them a background of combat experience that has resulted in an army of battle-hardened veterans. The military establishment in 1967

was not, however, a balanced force. The preponderance of ground elements, with heavy emphasis on infantry, did not make for an effective up-to-date force equipped to fight a modern war.

The basic organization of the armed forces has remained fundamentally unchanged from that inherited from the British, and a residual British influence continues to pervade all levels of the military structure. Under the chairman of the Revolutionary Council and the minister of defense, the chief of staff, Burma Defense Services, is the supreme military commander of the armed forces. From him the chain of command extends downward to the individual through the respective vice chiefs of staff for army, navy and air force. Subordinate to the vice chiefs are the regional area commanders, who receive their orders through their service chiefs or from the supreme commander through the vice chief of staff for the army. There is no direct channel through individual branches, such as artillery or engineers, but matters concerned with a specialized function of the headquarters staff are channeled through the appropriate staff department.

The Defense Services Staff, with headquarters in the Ministry of Defense at Rangoon, functions at the top level for the three services, although each has a subordinate staff to handle its own particular operations. The staff comprises three major components: the Chief of Staff Department, known as the "G" Staff, the Adjutant General's Department, or "A" Staff, and the Quartermaster General's Department, called the "Q" Staff. There are, in addition, four special office chiefs who are directly responsible to the chief of staff. These are the inspector general, the director of procurement, the controller of military accounts and the judge advocate general. The allocation of staff responsibilities and method of functioning conform closely to standard British military practice.

The army is composed mainly of infantry, but includes elements of armor, artillery and engineers, as well as administrative and support troops. The forces are organized principally into battalions, the infantry battalion of approximately 750 men being the basic tactical combat unit. The army's 1967 arms inventory included fairly substantial quantities of heavy infantry weapons, artillery and armor. Most of the materiel was from British or United States sources, and much of it dated back to the first years of independence and was approaching obsolescence.

In 1967 the country was divided into six major military districts, designated the Central, Eastern, Southeast, Southwest, Northwest, and Rangoon Commands. Each was in charge of a

general officer who reported directly to the vice chief of staff (army), and was responsible for all activities in his area. Disposition of army units is changed frequently, usually as dictated by operational requirements. There are, however, fixed garrisons spread throughout the country; the majority are in the strategic central valley along the Rangoon-Mandalay axis, with the largest concentration of forces in the area surrounding Rangoon.

The navy is a small force made up principally of patrol ships and landing craft. In 1967 it also had one fleet mine sweeper and one frigate, several motor torpedo boats (PT), and a number of service and support craft. All the ships were of foreign origin, mostly British and American, and the navy was entirely dependent on outside aid for spare parts and virtually all types of naval supplies. Navy headquarters is at Rangoon, the principal naval base and location of the Naval Dockyard as well as storage and supply facilities ashore.

The vice chief of staff (navy) is assisted by a senior staff officer who acts somewhat in the capacity of a chief of naval operations. A small staff handles administration, training and operations and supervises the activities of supporting services. The only structural subordination consists of three naval subcommands, the Irrawaddy, the Tenasserim and the Bassein Naval Regions. Units afloat are subordinate to their region commanders except for those based at Rangoon, which are directly under the operational control of the navy vice chief of staff. Although some of the larger units operated off the coast in the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea, the navy was used primarily for river patrol duty and support of army operations against insurgents.

The air force is small but active; it provides limited air-ground support to the army and furnishes needed transportation and medical evacuation for operations in difficult and otherwise inaccessible terrain. Its aircraft include transports, helicopters and trainers, with over 20 armed jet trainers that are used as fighters. After years of British support in all phases of operations and training, the air force has become self-sufficient except for procurement, which must still rely on outside sources for aircraft and parts. Flight training is conducted locally, and Burmese flying schools are able to turn out enough pilots to meet current air force needs.

Air force headquarters consists of the vice chief of staff for air, who is a brigadier, and a colonel of Air Staff who acts as his chief of staff. A small specialized air staff is integrated with the staff departments of general headquarters. Tactical organization consists of operational wings which are based in dispersed areas of the country. They are grouped by function as fighter,

transport and administrative elements. The staff also supervises training and maintenance facilities.

The country has only two or three airfields that can accommodate heavy jet transports, and most air facilities meet only minimum requirements for routine operations. There were some 15 airfields with paved runways of over 6,000 feet, in 1967, but only Mingaladon Airfield, the country's international airport near Rangoon, has a concrete-surfaced runway. Although most fields had limited storage capacity, fuel was available at the principal bases in limited quantities. Despite its problems and limitations the air force was, nevertheless, a valuable asset in the irregular type of warfare in which the armed forces were engaged.

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

The general environment and physical conditions surrounding garrison life have not changed radically since British colonial times. Many of the facilities of the colonial era continued in use in 1967, and many of the newer ones still conformed to British patterns. Despite almost 20 years of independence, most military installations still retained the appearance and atmosphere of a British colonial post. Assignment to a fixed post was rare, however, as the constant state of hostilities required troops to spend most of their time in the field.

For the most part, the serviceman was well cared for by the authorities, and the conditions of his service were at a high level of dignity and comfort in relation to normal local standards. His daily routine was exacting and often dangerous, but discipline, though strict, was not severe, and he had status, recognition and economic security.

Military posts were scattered throughout the country, but they were concentrated mostly in the central valley, usually in the vicinity of a sizable town or city. Although primitive by Western standards, they compared favorably with most local civilian facilities, and their tropical construction adequately met the needs of the services. In general, quarters, food and pay were as good as a man could find outside the service and in many cases were considerably better. There were separate accommodations for officers and, on some stations, housing for dependent families, who were provided rations and medical care as well as quarters.

There were several advantages that added attraction to a military career, such as accrual of leave, medical care, retirement and survivor benefits. Pay was consistent with the country's economic level and was considered good in relation to comparable skill groups in the civilian world. A variety of supplementary allowances for quarters, rations, families, special skills and

hazardous duty could substantially augment basic rates to attractive levels well above the civilian norm. Rations were generally superior to the food consumed by much of the population, and standards of nutrition provided greater variety and a more balanced diet while conforming to local dietary patterns.

In 1967 retirement procedures still followed the British army system. Retirement could be for disability, length of service, or age, and could be statutory or granted upon request. Retired pay was geared to length of service and grade held and could reach a maximum of 75 percent of the active duty rate. There was also a scale of survivor benefits which provided pensions to widows and families of officers or men disabled on active duty or killed in action. Service leave policies were liberal, with all ranks accruing ordinary leave at the rate of 30 days a year, and there were special provisions for emergency situations.

All military personnel could receive free medical treatment at military base or station hospitals, and members of the immediate family were eligible for treatment where facilities were available. Although there was a shortage of regular military doctors, conscript medical personnel adequately met normal demands, and the quality of medical service maintained a relatively high level.

UNIFORMS, INSIGNIA AND DECORATIONS

The rank and grade structure of the three services generally follows the British pattern, with personnel designated as officers and "other ranks." Navy and air force ranks conform to British equivalents; the army structure closely parallels that of the United States Army. Officers' insignia of grade are displayed on shoulder loops, and noncommissioned officers' chevrons are worn on the upper sleeve. Officers' insignia utilize a system of brass bars, stars and wreathed, crossed swords. The stars are 5-pointed, surmounted by the national arms within a circle; the bars represent stylized leaves extended in elongated form. Noncommissioned officers' chevrons are worn with the points down; the combat arms use black stripes on a red base, and colors are reversed for specialists and supporting services (see table 18).

The arms of Burma are used as a device to decorate officers' stars and uniform buttons and serve as the standard cap ornament for all ranks. They display an outline of the country in a circle between three stylized cheetas, the whole garlanded with leaves and a scroll. Branch insignia consist of embroidered cloth patches that are worn on the sleeves at the shoulder.

The uniforms of all three services are patterned after those of the British. The navy uses the traditional blue or white, and the air force has a Royal Air Force-blue uniform. There are three

Table 18. Burmese Army Ranks and Insignia

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Burmese Designation</i>	<i>Insignia</i>
General -----	Bogyokhmu -----	Wreathed swords and three stars
Lieutenant General ---	Bogyokgyi -----	Wreathed swords and two stars
Major General -----	Bogyoke -----	Wreathed swords and one star
Brigadier -----	Bohmuyoke -----	Wreathed swords
Colonel -----	Bohmugyi -----	Thabyeywet bar and three stars
Lieutenant Colonel ---	Dutiya Bohmugyi ---	Thabyeywet bar and two stars
Major -----	Bohmu -----	Thabyeywet bar and one star
Captain -----	Bogyi -----	Three thabyeywet bars
Lieutenant -----	Bo -----	Two thabyeywet bars
Second Lieutenant ---	Dutiya Bo -----	One thabyeywet bar
Warrant Officer I-----	Ayakanbo -----	National arms circled by wreath (worn at cuff)
Warrant Officer -----	Dutiya Ayakanbo --	National arms (worn at cuff)
Sergeant -----	Datkyatgyi -----	Three chevrons
Corporal -----	Datkyat -----	Two chevrons
Lance Corporal (PFC) -----	Dutiya Datkyat -----	One chevron

types of army dress, consisting of a service uniform and a field uniform for all ranks and a dress uniform for officers. Enlisted men's uniforms are of cotton, and both types are of similar design. They consist of shirt and trousers, worn with a web belt, and trousers tucked into short leggings for field wear. The service uniform is khaki colored, and the field uniform green.

On garrison duty or in the field, officers may wear a bush jacket instead of the shirt, and for more formal wear, a coat, shirt and black tie. The coat has four bellows pockets and a cloth belt. The officers' dress uniform is khaki-colored worsted or gabardine for summer and darker colored wool for winter. The coat shows only lower pocket flaps and is worn without a belt. Officers wear the standard visored cap, enlisted men have a wide-brim bush hat of felt or cloth, usually worn with a leather chinstrap. All ranks, on occasion, wear a beret or a helmet.

Extensive use is made of awards and decorations, and the military are particularly conscious of the many national symbols of official recognition. There are three classes of national honors; orders, titles and decorations, all of which may be awarded to military personnel.

Two national orders rank as the country's highest awards, the Order of the Dhamma and the Order of the Union of Burma. Similar to British orders, they are presented in three and five classes, respectively, the two highest grades being Grand Commander and Grand Officer. There are five titles that are given in recognition of meritorious service, bestowing on the recipient a lifelong title which he appends to his name. Each title also

carries with it a corresponding medal, which is usually a neck decoration.

There are six decorations that are used to reward military heroism or long and meritorious service. The two highest decorations for valor are the Aung San Thuriya and Aung San Tazeit, awarded for exceptional acts of gallantry on the battlefield. Following these in precedence are the Thiha Thura Tazeit, Thiha Bala Tazeit and Thura Tazeit. The final decoration, the Sit Hmu Htan Guang Tazeit, is for long, faithful and honorable service.

There are other forms of recognition for acts or service that do not warrant a higher award. The British system of "mention in despatches" is used extensively, and there is a wide variety of service medals, commemorative awards and campaign stars that are issued periodically.

LOGISTICS

The Quartermaster General's Department of the Defense Services Staff handles all logistics matters for the three services except major military purchasing, which is done by the Director of Procurement. This is a separate agency under the chief of staff which acts as sole purchasing agent for the acquisition of materiel from both foreign and domestic sources. Virtually all military hardware originates outside of the country, as do most other supplies, although there is some limited local production of small arms, ammunition and clothing. Much of the materiel currently in use by the armed forces was received through foreign aid from Great Britain and the United States. Current government policies, however, have placed all procurement on a purchase basis, usually negotiated each year under international sales agreements.

Procurement of supplies is complicated by lack of funds, long supply lines and the timelag involved in delivery from foreign sources. Distribution is poor, as there are insufficient aircraft to handle the required volume, and surface transportation is hampered by difficult terrain and a sparse roadnet. Storage and issue are conducted with reasonable efficiency, and some 25 depots, bases or other supply installations spread throughout the country are able to provide adequate service to most stations and units in the field.

Procurement of local supplies needed for day-to-day operations is decentralized down to battalion level. Rations are distributed from battalion headquarters on a daily basis, and many items, particularly perishables, are purchased as needed by the units in the field. Battalions also distribute clothing and organizational equipment, and commanders down through battalion level have

authority to requisition food, shelter, transport and labor from local sources.

In general, the services have adequate quantities of basic items on hand, such as uniforms and personal equipment for routine operations. There are sufficient individual weapons, and they are maintained in satisfactory condition. There are, however, limited stockpiles of reserve materiel and equipment to meet emergencies or cope with special situations. Spare parts are a continuing problem and often result in shortages in various categories, such as motor transportation and communications equipment. Lack of technicians hampers maintenance, and equipment is frequently idled for lack of qualified personnel to give it attention.

Navy logistic activities are centered at Rangoon, the location of its supply installations and main naval dockyard. Local facilities are able to handle most ship repair, but occasionally major overhaul has to be performed out of the country. Procurement of naval supplies is handled centrally like the army's, and virtually all storage and issue are effected at the naval supply depot at Rangoon. The principal air force supply and maintenance base is at Mingaladon Airfield at Rangoon. Here storage, repair and depot-level overhaul activities are centered. A few of the larger bases in other parts of the country have minimum facilities for maintenance and refueling, but only Mingaladon and, possibly, one or two others have a capacity for bulk storage of aviation gasoline and jet fuel.

The general staff has given the matter of logistics maximum attention within their capabilities. The structure provided for handling supply and maintenance activities is well organized and handicapped only by the limitations of national resources. Profiting from a sound background inculcated by the British, with the slim assets available, personnel involved in logistics perform creditably. In spite of the problem, materials do get through, and the forces are able to maintain the limited-scale operations they are prepared to undertake.

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GLOSSARY

AFPEL—Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League. The political party that led the independence movement and dominated politics until 1958.

Bandung Conference—Held in 1955. Sponsored by Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia and Pakistan. Attended by other nations of Asia and Africa. They asserted that their nations should participate more in international affairs.

BSPP—Burmese Socialist Program Party. A political party created by the Revolutionary Council as a vanguard party to guide the people in building a socialist state. The only party permitted to operate after 1964.

Buddha Day—Important holiday that commemorates the birth, death and enlightenment of Buddha.

Burma proper—The portion of the country that excludes the mountainous regions adjacent to the eastern, western and northern frontiers.

Burmah Oil Company—A British-owned company that operated during the colonial period. After independence it joined several smaller oil companies and the Burmese Government in forming the Burma Oil Company. This company was nationalized in 1963 and called the People's Oil Company.

Burman—The dominant ethnic group; it constitutes most of the population.

Burmese—A member of any of the several ethnic groups indigenous to Burma; also, the official language of the country.

chinlon—A popular Burmese game, in which a ball is balanced and tossed with various parts of the body (see ch. 8, Living Conditions).

Colombo Plan—The Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia. Coordinates aid of Western nations and Japan to Asian nations with aid that Asian nations provide for each other.

Dhammasetkya—Important Buddhist holiday, which marks the official beginning of the Buddhist holy season and commemorates Buddha's renunciation of worldly life.

eingyi—A long-sleeved and starched jacket worn by both sexes. With the *longyi*, the wraparound skirt which accompanies it, it makes up the extensively worn national costume.

karma (kamma)—According to Buddhist teaching, the impersonal law of causation that determines one's past, present and future existences.

ko—A title of address or reference used between males of approximately the same age and social position.

kutho—Buddhist merit. May be earned by strict adherence to the Buddhist precepts and by the performance of good deeds. A positive store of merit is believed necessary for an improved *karma* and a better future existence.

kyat—Monetary unit of Burma. The official exchange rate is K4.76 equal US\$1.

kyaung—A Buddhist word meaning monastery or school.

longyi—A wraparound skirt, often in colorful design, worn by members of both sexes. With the jacket, the *eingyi*, it is the extensively worn national costume.

Lower Burma—The southern portion of Burma proper. It is approximately half of the country.

maistry—A labor contractor, who was important during the colonial era. He hired labor gangs for seasonal work on the farms.

maung—A title of address or reference used toward a male of lesser status, usually a boy or a very young man.

MIS—Military Intelligence Service. The intelligence service of the Ministry of Defense.

Myanma—Burman literary term of self-reference.

national races—Burmans' name for the minority ethnic groups that inhabit the frontier regions of the country.

nats—An important category of supernatural beings, which form part of the Burmese religious cosmology. They are believed to cause misfortune and illness, though their forbearance may be earned through prayer and material offerings.

natwin—Girl's ear-piercing ceremony; marks entrance into adulthood and eligibility to receive suitors.

ngapi—A pungent seafood paste, which is used extensively as a condiment or seasoning.

nirvana (nibbana)—According to Buddhist teaching, the state of enlightenment and true wisdom attained by escape from the cycle of rebirth.

pon—Spiritual power or glory believed by Buddhists to be inherent, in varying degrees, in all males.

pongyi—An ordained Buddhist monk. Almost any man may become a *pongyi*, either temporarily or for life, by renouncing worldly life and observing the 227 rules of monastic conduct.

pwe—The principal traditional form of Burmese theatrical performance.

Revolutionary Council—The council, made up exclusively of military officers, which has governed Burma since 1962. Council members are also the creators and leaders of the Burmese Socialist Program Party.

samsara—The Buddhist wheel or cycle of rebirth, to which the individual is tied in an endless round of existences. Escape from this cycle is the core of Buddha's teaching and is the ultimate goal of devout Buddhists.

sangha—The loosely structured institution of the Buddhist monkhood.

saohpa (sawbwa)—Hereditary Shan prince; either a head of one of the Shan states or a member of the lesser nobility.

sayadaw—A learned and respected monk or the presiding monk over a monastery or a group of monasteries.

shikko—A respectful gesture in which one kneels and touches his head to the floor before an honored person. This is a traditional practice that is becoming less prevalent.

shinbyu—The ritual ordination of Buddhist novices, signifying a boy's entrance into adulthood.

Thadingyut—Festival of Lights. Signifies the end of the Buddhist holy period as well as the end of the rainy season.

Thathanabaing—The head of the monastic hierarchy in precolonial Burma. The position persisted into the twentieth century but gradually has lost its importance.

Theravada Buddhism—One of the two major schools of Buddhism; the principal religion of Burma and several other Southeast Asian countries. Sometimes known as the Hinayana or Lesser Vehicle school; the other major school is called the Mahayana or Greater Vehicle.

Thingyan—Water Festival. Burma's most important holiday, marking the new year and the coming of the monsoon.

U—A title of address or reference. Used toward any male of high social position and seniority.

ubonei—Buddhist duty day; occurs four or five times a month. Devout Buddhists visit the monastery on *ubonei* and may observe additional religious precepts.

Upper Burma—The northern portion of Burma proper. It is approximately half of the country.

yoke—A pair of oxen. As a measure of land, the amount a yoke can be assumed to be able to plow in a day.

INDEX

- Agence France-Presse (French news agency) :** 201
agrarian reform. See land: reform
Agricultural College (Mandalay) : 106
Agricultural Development Resources Corporation: 305
Agricultural Laborers' Minimum Wages Act, 261
Agricultural Resources Development Corporation: 301
agriculture (see also crops, land): 3-4; attitude toward new methods and techniques, 149; Burmese and, 32; credit, 224, 299, 301, 302, 304; double-cropping, 229, 230, 234; in the economy, 219-220, 222-223, 227-241; education, 109, 112, 222, 235; equipment, 228, 284, 292, 293; exports, 227, 283; government expenditures, 306; labor force, 47 (table 5), 262; major regions, 228; news coverage, 201; and population concentration, 19; prices, 223, 235; production, 223, 235; productivity, 227; products, 283-285; shifting, 4, 16, 20, 57, 58, 234; tractors, 228, 234, 292; wages, 261-262; wet-rice, 58
Air force: 327, 336, 338, 340, 343
air routes: 22
air transport: 279
airfields: 22, 339, 343
Alaungpaya (Burman leader) : 29, 329
All-Burma Postal Workers' Federation: 269
All-Burma Rice Industrialists Association: 268
All-India Radio: 208
American Medical Center: 93
Anawrahta (Burman hero), 27, 31, 328
Andaman Islands: 12
Andaman Sea: 2, 9, 13, 17
Anglo-Burma Tin Company: 250
animals: See livestock
animism: 4, 27, 28
annual cycle: 147-149
Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPEL) : 34, 35, 36, 37, 174-180 *passim*, 212, 213, 214, 266
appliances, electric: 100
architecture, 119-121
Arracan Flotilla Company: 278
Arakan Coastal Strip: natural features, 12; population, 57
Arakan Division: climate, 15; communists, 180; erosion, 230; history, 29; language, 52; oil, 245; as political division, 4, 18; rice, 228, 235; rivers, 13
Arakan Yoma (mountain range) : 12, 13, 14, 15, 18
Arakanese (people) : attitude toward government, 179; characteristics, 215
armed forces: See military
Army: organization, 337; ranks and insignia, 340, 341 (table 18); strength, 327; structure, 340; training, 334-336; uniform: 341
art: 118, 119
Artisan Training Center (Rangoon) : 106
Asian Development Bank: 197
Asian Socialist Conference: 189, 194
Associated Press (U.S. news agency) : 201
Attlee, Clement (British leader) : 35, 160
Aung Gyi, Brigadier: 181, 182
Aung San, Colonel (national hero) : 34, 35, 118, 160, 173, 214, 218
Australia: 282, 293
Ava House Limited (printed material) : 206
Aye Maung, U (writer) : 129

Ba Maw (Prime Minister) : 33, 34, 159
Ba Pe, U (nationalist leader) : 33
Ba Swe (socialist leader) : 175, 176
balance of payments: 293, 294 (table 15), 296

- Baluchaung River: 246
banks and banking: 222, 224, 233, 248, 273, 274, 276, 295–308 *passim*
Bassein (city): 44; health, 93, 94; population, 21 (table 1); port, 277; trade, 273
Bay of Bengal: 2, 9, 12, 17, 24
bibliographies: economic, 353–354; national security, 355–356; political, 351–352; social, 345–350
birth control: 84; Buddhist attitude, 44
birth rate: 90
blackmarket, 225, 271, 302
books: 199, 205, 206, 208
boundaries: 9, 10, 17–18, 190, 192, 193, 282
British Broadcasting Corporation: 208
British Commonwealth: *See* Great Britain
British Council: 96
British East India Company: 5, 29, 329
Buddhism (*see also* Buddhists, ceremonies and celebrations, monks and monkhood): 4, 43, 56; and family, 77–78 *passim*; five basic precepts, 134; history, 26–28, 30; influence, 23, 145–147, 209; and labor unions, 265; and moral behavior, 146; philosophy, 132–133, 151–152, 153, 213; political status, 142, 161, 162, 217; relations with other religious groups, 142–144; role of, 133–134; and social status, 68, 70, 71, 72; symbolism, 135–136; synthesized with Marxism, 213, 216; as unifying factor, 31; values, 4
Buddhists (*see also* ceremonies and celebrations, monks and monkhood): 60; attitude toward birth control, 44; behavior norms, 134; and education, 69; and food, 98; meditational activity, 74; merit-earning and status, 70, 71, 72, 87, 146; organizations and groups, 74; in population, 43, 131; schools (*see* schools: Buddhist); and unification, 46
budget, state: 168, 304–308, 332
Bureau of Special Investigations: 323, 324
Burma Broadcasting Service (BBS): 204, 205, 206
Burma Chamber of Commerce: 268
Burma Code (criminal): 313, 316, 324
Burma Corporation: 250
Burma Defense Services: 331, 337
Burma Economic Development Corporation: 248, 249, 274, 278
Burma Independence Bill: 160
Burma Journalists Association: 201
Burma Oil Company: 7, 223, 247, 250, 252, 261, 262, 295
Burma Pharmaceutical Institute: 93
Burma Postal Union: 270
Burma Red Cross Society: 96
Burma Research Medical Institute: 93
Burma Research Society: 128
Burma Road: 22
Burma-Soviet trade treaty: 196
Burma Trade Union Congress (BTUC): 266, 267, 269
Burma Translation Society: 118
Burma Workers and Peasants Party: 175, 180
Burmanization: 1, 7, 39, 40, 312
Burmans: attitudes toward minority ethnic groups, 62; character, 333; economic activity, 50, 258; as ethnic group, 3–4, 56; family, 77; history, 5, 24–31 *passim*, 328; language, 51, 52, 53, 63, 64; and the military, 216, 328, 329–330, 333; in the population, 3, 42 (table 4), 51; religion, 43; self valuation, 215; social structure, 66
Burmese (people): attitude toward minorities, 155; attitude toward new techniques in agriculture, 149; attitude toward public office, 152; character, 310–311; economic activities, 1, 6, 32, 39, 220, 272; and religion, 131, 133–139, 142–144, 145–147; and social behavior, 150–151
Burmese (language): official status, 163; use in instruction, 103–104, 114, 116
Burmese Chinese Party: 191
Burmese Socialist Program Party (BSPP): 7, 182, 206, 216, 258, 260
Burmese Way to Socialism: 244, 249, 267, 269
business: and nationalization, 7, 8; and public employment exchange, 259–260; women in, 80, 272, 273
Cabinet of State Ministers: 167
calendar: 135, 148
capitalism: 1
cattle raising: 16
censorship: 199, 200, 201

- Central Belt: natural features, 12; population, 19
- Central Land Committee: 232
- Central School of Political Science (Mingaladon): 109, 269
- ceramics: 125-126
- ceremonies and celebrations: 72, 73-74, 80, 82, 87-88, 121, 134-139, 143, 147
- Ceylon: as export market, 285, 286, 287 (table 14)
- Chiang Kai-shek: 190
- Chief court: 166, 316
- child labor: 48, 263
- children: 84-86, 137, 150-151, 263; life-cycle rituals, 87-88, 138; minor offenders, 314, 315
- Chin Hills: 18; disease, 91; government, 166; weaving, 124
- Chin Special Division: 2, 51; dwellings, 100; erosion, 230; language, 52; population, 45, 57; mining, 245; rice, 236
- China (*see also* Communist China, Nationalist China): history, 24, 26, 28, 29; Kuomintang forces, 37, 188; migration from, 5, 6, 32, 39, 45-46, 51
- Chindwin River: 12, 13, 14, 20, 26, 277, 278
- Chinese: economic activity, 6, 115, 220, 247, 249, 271, 272, 274, 276; as ethnic group, 58-59; and ethnic group relations, 62-63; and farmer indebtedness and land alienation, 220, 231, 233; language, 54, 64; and money supply, 302; organizations, 75, 268; population, 42 (table 4), 43, 54; religion, 131, 143
- Chins (people): 3, 5, 24, 31, 46: attitude toward the central government, 179; characteristics, 215; as ethnic group, 57-58; family, 77; language, 52, 53, 63; and military service, 333; outside relations, 60; population, 42 (table 4), 52; religion, 4
- Chou En-lai: 190, 194
- Christian missionaries: 131
- Christianity: 58, 61, 62
- cigarette industries: 250
- cities: 6, 20, 273; major, population, 21 (table 1)
- civil liberties: 162
- civil service: 6, 68, 115, 169-171, 174, 211-212, 244, 252, 259-267 *passim*
- Civil Supplies Management Board: 273, 274, 275
- Clean Party: *See* Union Party
- climate: 15, 149
- clothing: 3, 62, 99
- coastline: 2, 9, 17
- Cold War: and attitude toward UN, 197; and foreign policy, 36, 185, 195
- Colombo Plan: 197, 293
- Colombo Powers: 189
- commerce: 1, 32, 47, 49, 220
- communications: 10, 12, 18, 20, 190, 192, 199-208, 306
- communism: 23, 175, 176, 178, 185, 195, 196, 214
- Communist China: 46; aid, 2, 255, 282, 286, 291, 292; and banking, 298; border, 17, 37, 46; Economic Aid Agreement, 292; as export market, 225, 287 (table 14); frontier treaty with, 37; as import supplier, 287 (table 13); loans, 295; and news media, 203, 204; political party with ties to, 180; recognition of, 36; relations with, v, 36, 188, 189, 190-191; territorial claims, 17; trade, 190, 225, 286, 287 (tables 13, 14), 288; trade agreements, 226, 286
- Communist countries (*see also* Communist China, Soviet Union): aid, 291-292; trade, 287
- communists: 34, 35, 36, 180, 182
- Constituent Assembly: 35, 160
- constitution: 1, 32, 35, 159; and the armed forces, 331; and foreign relations, 186; framing of, 160; fundamental rights, 162; and government of states, 166-168; and judicial system, 312-313; and land ownership, 232; provisions of, 161-164
- cooking oils: *See* oils, cooking
- cooperatives: 273, 274, 299
- co-Prosperity Sphere: 33
- cottage industry: 47, 48, 50, 249, 250, 255, 257
- cotton: 235, 237-238, 288; production 236 (table 7)
- Council of Ministers: 331
- Council on National Liberation: 180
- courts, 162-168 *passim*, 311-317 *passim*
- Courts of Appeal, 317
- courtship: 81
- crime (*see also* punishment): 309-315 *passim*

- crops: 220, 227, 234, 235, 237-239;
 financing cultivation, 301; produc-
 tion, 236 (table 7)
 cultural activities: 73, 117-129
 culture: types of, 55
- dance, 121
 death: attitude toward, 146; rate, 90
 Defense Service Institute: 248, 249,
 274, 275
 Defense Service Academy: 334
 Defense Services Staff College: 335
 democratic practices: awareness of,
 157, 169, 173
 Department of Social Welfare: 97
 development plans: *See* economic and
 social development plans
 diet: 3, 97-98
 discrimination: 50, 62, 65, 155, 276
 disease: 17, 89, 90, 91
 divorce: 80, 82, 83
 doctors. *See* physicians and surgeons
 drama: 118, 121-122
 dress: *See* clothing
 dwellings: 56, 57, 58, 83-84, 97, 99-
 100
 dynasties: 26, 27 (table 2), 28-29
- economic assistance: *See* foreign aid
 Economic Commission for Asia and
 the Far East: 94
 economic policy: aim, 219
 economic and social development
 plans: 36, 95, 221, 222, 247, 305
 economy: character and structure,
 219-226
 education (*see also* military: train-
 ing; schools): 50, 103-116; adult,
 109, 112, 116; agriculture, 109, 112,
 222, 235; attitude toward, 114-115;
 dropout rate, 114; higher, 71, 106,
 110-112; labor, 258; methods, 112-
 114; news coverage, 201; public sys-
 tem, 106-109, 116; pupil-teacher
 ratios, 112; radio programs, 205;
 and religion, 69, 114; role in society:
 114-116; rural areas, 69-70; Rus-
 sian textbooks, 208; scholarships
 and fellowships, 112; and status, 69,
 71; of teachers, 113; teaching meth-
 ods: 112-114; and urban-rural dif-
 ferences, 152-153; Western, conflict
 with traditional institutions, 6, 32
 elections: 7, 35, 36, 37, 160, 175, 176,
 177
- electric power: 243, 245-246 (table
 8), 251
 Electricity Supply Board: 246
 emeralds: 14
 emigration: 48
 employment: conditions of, 259-263;
 public employment exchange, 259
 Employment Control Board: 260
 Employment and Training Act: 259
 engineering works: 22
 English: as language of instruction,
 110; as second language, 64, 104,
 116; teaching of, 195, 205; usage,
 163, 215
 Enterprise Nationalization Law: 43,
 45, 191, 192
 entertainment: 100-101, 122, 149
 ethnic groups (*see also* Burmans,
 Chinese, Chins, Indians, Kachins,
 Karens, Mons, Pakistanis, unifica-
 tion): 3-4; under British rule, 31;
 dispersion, 19; division of labor, 44,
 50; and languages, 51-64; minority
 attitudes toward government, 179-
 180; number of, 42; relations
 among, 60-63; size of, 42 (table 4)
 executive power: 161
 expenditures, government: 305-306;
 military, 332
 Export Agency, Burma: 225, 277,
 289, 290
 exports (*see also under* agriculture,
 minerals, rice, teak, timber): 219-
 227 *passim*, 240, 243, 247, 253, 254,
 271-277 *passim*, 281-286 *passim*;
 major, 284 (table 11); markets,
 major, 281, 287 (table 14)
- Factories Act: 263
 family: 55, 59, 68, 77-88; and politics,
 209; relationships, 4; structure, 4-5,
 77-80
 farmers: 147, 148, 149, 154, 155; debt
 and land alienation, 220, 231, 233;
 and politics, 180-181
 farming: 2, 6, 12, 22, 50, 219-220
 Federation of Trade Organization:
 268
 festivals: *See* ceremonies and celebra-
 tions
 fibers: 237
 Film Academy Award Board: 205
 Film Censor Board: 205
 films: 123, 199, 205, 207

financial institutions (*see also* banks and banking): 7, 301-302
 fish and fishing: 16, 227, 240, 271
 Five Principles of Coexistence: 185, 189
 flag: 163, 218
 floods and flood control: 229, 230
 Flying Training School: 334
 food (*see also* diet): 55, 97-98; imports, 284; industry, 224, 249, 251, 254
 Ford Foundation: 96, 112, 195
 foreign aid (*see also* Communist China: aid; Great Britain, aid; military: aid; Soviet Union: aid; United States: aid): 2, 186, 187, 195, 196, 226, 230, 240, 255, 281, 290-293; communist, 291-292; Economic Aid Agreement, 292; government attitude toward, 282; for welfare programs, 96; West Germany, 256, 282, 293
 foreign exchange, 226, 227, 247, 281, 293, 298, 302
 foreign influence: intent to eliminate, 186, 190, 217, 222
 foreign information: 207-208
 foreign investment, 243, 248, 249, 282, 294
 foreign policy: 185-190, 226
 foreign relations: v, 2, 36, 163, 185-198; role as neutralist leader, 189
 foreign trade (*see also* exports, imports): 9; composition, 282-285; manpower resources, 49; nationalization, 7, 224-226, 249, 252, 254, 284; organization of, 289-290; pattern, 285-289; position in economy, 219
 foreigners and foreign institutions: 8; attitude toward, 1, 39, 154-155, 258, 289
 forests: 14, 15-16, 229, 240
Forward (official organ of Revolutionary Council): 206
 France: 30, 329, 330
 Free Trade Unions of Burma (FTUB): 269
 Freedom Bloc: 33
 fuel: mineral, 14, 288
 Fulbright program: 195
 Fundamental Education Act: 108
 Fundamental Education Supervisory Council: 108
 funerals: 138

General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT): 197
 General Assembly: 188
 geographic regions: 10, 11 (fig. 2), 12
 Germany, Federal Republic of: aid, 256, 282, 293
 glossary: 357-359
 gold: 14
 goods and services: balance of payments, 294 (table 15)
 government (*see also* civil service; constitution; military: and government): administrators, 174-176, 211-212; attitudes toward, 60, 61, 62, 179-180, 210, 217; budget, 168, 304-308, 332; constitutional system, 38, 158-161; democratic practices, awareness of, 157, 169, 173; dyarchical system, 159; expenditures, 305-306; goals, 209; history, 6, 32, 66-67, 158-160, 169; information, 206-207; local, 168-169; main organs of, 161; and the monkhood, 141-142; political administrative divisions, 170 (fig. 3); and public information, 212; state, 166-168; structure and functions, 164-166; system of, 1, 157-171; and trade, 274-277; and villages, 158, 168-169
 Government of Burma Act, 159
 Government Technical Institute (Insein): 106
 Great Britain: and agriculture, 231; aid, 282, 293, 332, 342; and architecture, 120; and armed forces, 327-340 *passim*; and attitude of civil servants, 173-174, 211-212 and banking, 298, 299; and constitutional development, 158-159, 161; and Burmese value system, 155; engineering works, 22; and ethnic groups, 3, 62; history, 1, 29-33, 34; as import supplier, 225, 287 (table 13); and independence, 34-35; land annexations, 9; and law, 311-313, 315; and local government, 168-169; and medical services, 89; and oil production, 252; relations with, 189, 196; and self-government, 169; and social structure, 65; trade, 225, 271, 272, 281, 285, 287 (tables, 13, 14), 288
 Gulf of Martaban: 17, 21
 handicrafts: 123-127
 harbors: 277

Harcourt Butler Institute: 93
 health (*see also* disease, hospitals): 89, 90-97; rural centers, 93, 94; services and facilities, 92-95
 highways: *See* roads and highways
 Hinayana Buddhism: 27, 132
 Hindu Ramakrishna Mission Hospital: 92, 93, 94
 Hindu religion: 4, 131
 Hindus: 60, 131, 143
 history: 23-38; armed forces, 328-331; British period, 29-33, 34-35; and character of society, 3-8; dynasties, 26, 27 (table 2), 28, 29; Japanese occupation, 6, 23, 33-34, 159; territorial divisions, 18; tribal stage, 24-25
 Hlaing River: 277
 holidays: 135-137, 147, 207
 hospitals: 8, 91-96 *passim*, 291
 houses: *See* dwellings
 household unit: 78
 hydroelectric power: 10, 246, 292, 293

 illiteracy: 69, 140, 199, 235
 immigration: 5-6, 32, 44, 51, 59; attitude toward border crossing, 18; illegal, 17; restriction, 43, 45
 imports (*see also under* textiles): 205, 206, 225, 253-255 *passim*, 271-275 *passim*, 281-288 *passim*: major, 285 (table 12); major suppliers, 287 (table 13)
 income, personal: 3
 independence: 1, 34-38, 174; creation of Union of Burma, 35; and cultural revival, 117-119; declaration, 34, 159, 160; under Japanese occupation, 33; and political leaders, 174; and position of monks, 142; and problems of agriculture, 227; and relations with Great Britain, 196
 Independence Preparatory Commission: 159
 India: administrative separation from, 32, 159; and banking, 298, 299; border, 17-18; films from, 205; history, 5-6, 25-26, 29, 32; immigration from 39, 44-45, 51, 59; relations with, 191-192; trade, 225, 254, 272, 281, 285, 286, 287 (tables 13, 14), 288
 India Act: 159

Indians: attitudes toward, 155; economic activities, 1, 6, 25, 39, 115, 220, 231, 247, 249, 271, 272, 273, 276; as ethnic group, 59-60, 62-63; and farmer indebtedness and land alienation, 220, 231, 233; influence, 25-26, 55, 63; language, 54; and money supply, 302; organizations, 75, 268; population, 42 (table 4), 43, 54; religion, 131, 143; repatriation, 45, 59-60, 192
 individualism: 151-152
 Indonesia: 283; as export market, 281, 285, 287 (table 14); relations with, 193
 Industrial Development Corporation: 223, 247, 250, 301
 Industrial Development Promotion Board: 248, 249
 industrialization: 244, 247-249; and adequacy of natural resources, 243; plan for, 221
 industry: in the economy, 220, 243-256; employment, 4, 49, 115; foreigners and development of, 32; government attitudes and policy, 243, 246-249; government expenditures, 306; heavy, 250; labor force, 1, 47, 243; nationalization, 223, 244, 249, 250, 251, 252; production, 223, 224, 249, 251 (table 9), 252; structure and organization, 249-251
 inflation: 35, 299, 303, 304
 information. *See* foreign information, government information, public information
 Inland Water Transport Board: 278
 insect pests: 17
 Institute of Foreign Languages (Rangoon): 116
 intelligence activities: 323-324
 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development: 197
 International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU): 269
 International Labor Organization (ILO): 40, 43, 48, 96, 262, 265, 270
 International Monetary Fund: 197, 298
International News Bulletin (of BSPP): 206
 international organizations: 2, 197-198
 International Red Cross Society: 96

International Transport Workers' Union: 270

Investigating Groups: violations of socialist economic laws, 317

investment (*see also* foreign investment, private investment); 295

Irrawaddy Delta: 5, 10; agriculture, 234, 235; climate, 15; disease, 92; engineering works, 22; oil, 245; population, 19, 39, 42, 44; railroad, 21; rice, 235; rural debt and land alienation, 220; watercourses, 20

Irrawaddy Division: 9, flood control, 229; industry, 251; as political division, 18

Irrawaddy River, 2, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 42, 57, 58, 63, 220, 228, 234, 253, 277

Irrawaddy Valley: 5, 24, 26, 328
irrigation: 2, 10, 20, 22, 47, 220, 227-230 *passim*, 292, 293

islands, 12

isolationism, 2

Israel: aid, 282, 293; relations with, 194

Isthmus of Kra: 9, 10, 14, 17, 21

jade: 254

Japan: aid, 240; language usage, 64; occupation of Burma, 6, 23, 33-34, 159; relations with, 194; reparations, 282, 292, 307; and rice cultivation, 234; trade, 225, 272, 286, 287 (tables 13, 14); and vehicle assembly plant, 256

Japanese resistance movement: 175

jewels and jewelry: 14, 126-127, 254

judicial system (*see also* courts, law): 312-318

jute: 221, 223, 238, 243, 244, 247, 250, 255, 284, 301

Kachin State: 18, 51, 61; agriculture, 238; courts, 318; erosion, 230; gold, 14; government, 166; rice, 236; population, 57; teak, 15

Kachins (people): 46; attitude toward government, 62, 179; characteristics, 215; as ethnic group, 3, 57, 60, 61; family, 77; history, 3, 24, 31; language, 52, 53; and military service, 31, 333; population, 42 (table 4), 53; religion, 4

Kaladan River: 13, 20

Karen National Defense Organization: 180

Karen State: population, 58

Karens (people): attitude toward government, 36, 62, 179, 180; characteristics, 215; as ethnic group, 3, 46, 58, 60, 61; history, 3, 24, 31; language, 53-54; and military service, 333; population, 42 (table 4), 53

Kawthule State: 18, 51, 166

Kayah State: 18, 51; agriculture, 236, 238; erosion, 230; government, 166;

Khin Maung, U (artist): 118
irrigation, 230; minerals, 14, 221, 245; population, 58; power, 246

kindergartens, 107, 108

kinship: 25, 55, 57, 59, 78, 79, 81, 86, 209

Knappen-Tippets-Abbett (engineering consultants): 290

Korea: 188, 193

Krupp interests (of West Germany), 245

Kuomintang forces: 37, 188

Kyaw Myein (deputy Prime Minister), 175, 176

labor (*see also* labor force, labor unions): contractor system, 260; ethnic division of, 1, 6, 31-32, 44; government attitude toward, 264; and politics, 264-265, 266, 267; manual, attitude toward, 49-50, 114; organization, 7, 257-270; relations, 263-270

Labor Control Board: 260

labor force (*see also* employment, manpower resources, unemployment, wages and salaries, *and under* agriculture, industry): age distribution, 48; benefits and protections, 96, 260-263; by economic sector, 47 (table 5); education, 258; productivity, 49, 257, 259, 262; recruitment, 259; rural, 47; safety, 263; structure, 47-48; urban, 48; work-day and workweek, 262

labor unions: 7, 175, 257-270; international affiliations, 269-270; and political parties, 264, 265, 266, 267

lacquer ware: 124-125

Lake Inle: 13, 101

land: alienation, 220, 231, 233; in crops, 236 (table 7); double-cropped, 229; in forests, 240; hold-

land (*continued*)

ings, size of, 163, 222, 232; nationalization, 221, 222, 232; reform, 221-222, 227, 232; state ownership and powers, 163; suitable for rice, 235-236; supply, 3, 46, 149, 228; tenure, 8, 47, 68, 221, 227, 230-234

Land Nationalization Act: 221, 222, 232

Land Tenancy Acts: 47

language (*see also* English, Russian): 23, 24; classification, 52-55; and communication, 63-64, 199-200, 204; differences and national integration, 215; ethnic groups and, 51-64; foreign, teaching of, 107, 197, 208; of instruction, 103-104, 105, 110, 114, 116; and literacy, 116; major stocks, 52; of news media, 201, 204, 208; official, 3, 163

Laos: 17

law: 157; criminal, 163, 313-316; international, 186, 187; property rights, 80; socialist economic, detection of violations, 317; the system, 312-318; Western, conflict with tradition, 6, 32, 311-312

Law of Fundamental Rights and Responsibilities of Workers: 263, 264

Law to Protect the Rights of Peasants: 233

lead: 14, 243, 245, 254, 282; production, 253 (table 10)

Leave and Holidays Act: 263

Ledo Road: *See* Stilwell Road

leftists: and student politics, 178-179

legislative powers: 162

literacy: 116

literature (*see also* books): 118, 127-129

livestock: 227, 234, 239-240

living conditions: 89-101

loans: government, 250, 293, 294 (table 15), 296, 303

Lower Burma: 5; agriculture, 220, 228, 231, 238; engineering works, 22; floods and flood control, 229; land tenure, 233; livestock, 239; marriage, 82; physical environment, 2, 9; population, 2, 39, 43, 46; rain forest, 16; rice production, 228; social structure, 66, 67, 68, 70

machinery (*see also* tractors); 115, 284, 285 (table 12), 288

magazines: 129

Magwe Division: 9, 14, 18

Mahayana Buddhism: 27, 132

malaria: 91

Malaysia: trade, 281, 285, 287 (tables 13, 14)

management: organization, 268

Mandalay (city): 2, 18, 20, 26; architecture, 120; cultural center, 117; employment exchange, 259; health, 91-94 *passim*; labor organization, 257; as political division, 18; population, 21 (table 1); power, 246; prison, 324; schools, 106, 110, 111, 112, 113; trade, 273; transportation, 21, 22, 279, 291; unemployment, 49; weaving, 124; welfare, 96

Mandalay Arts and Sciences University: 110, 111

Mandalay Division: 44, 230, 251

Mandalay University: 327

manpower resources: civil servants, 171; education, 113, 114; health, 8, 94-95; management and administration, 49, 224; military, 333-336; skilled labor, 8, 49, 115, 224, 258; study of, 270; trade, 115-116, 276

manufactures: imports, 285 (table 12)

manufacturing: 224, 243, 254-256

Mao Tse-tung: 190

maps: of Burma, x (fig. 1); political administrative divisions, 170 (fig. 3)

marriage: 57, 60, 67, 68, 78, 81-82

Martaban Fishing Company: 240

Marxism: 1, 175, 185, 213-216 *passim*, 257

Marxism-Leninism: 197, 214

Maung Htin Aung (writer): 129

medical facilities and services: *See* health: services and facilities

Mekong River: 17, 24

middle class: 66, 67, 71

migration: 70; internal, 44; rural to city, 152; tribal, 23-24

military: aid, 187, 195, 196, 327, 332, 342; attitude toward service, 328, 330-331; basis of service, 327; conditions of service, 339-340; creation of services, 176; decorations, 341; districts, 337-338; expenditures, 332; and government, 1-2, 157, 173, 177, 181-183, 331-333; history of

- armed forces, 328-331; logistics, 327, 342-343; manpower resources, 333-336; mission, 336-337; officers, background, 176-177; organization, 337-339; political activities, 177, 215-217; recruiting, 335; social status, 71; strength of armed forces, 327, 332, 335; training, 327, 334-336; uniforms, rank, and insignia, 340-341
- Min Aung (writer):** 129
- Mineral Resources Development Corporation:** 245
- minerals:** 221, 223, 243, 245; exports, 281, 282, 283, 288; production, 252, 253 (table 10), 254; resources, 14
- Mines Act:** 263
- Mingaladon airport (Rangoon):** 279, 339, 343
- Minimum Wage Act,** 260, 266
- mining:** 243, 244, 250, 251, 252, 254, 283
- Ministries:** 165; Defense, 327, 331, 337; Education, 106; Foreign Affairs, 186; Health, 92, 93; Home Affairs, 318, 324; Information and Culture, 203, 207; Labor, 96; and local government, 169; Transport, 278; Union Culture, 118, 119
- Mogok Valley:** 14
- monasteries:** 140-141; schools, 69, 104-105, 114
- money:** supply, 302, 303 (table 16), 304
- monks and monkhood:** 68, 70, 84, 85, 87-88, 139-141; activist associations, 141; attitudes toward, 70; book attacking, 128; and the government, 141-142; missionaries, 142-143; number of monks, 140; political activity, 142, 174, 177-179, 183; as political symbol, 217
- Mons (people):** 3, 46; attitude toward government, 179; characteristics, 215; history, 5, 18, 23-30 *passim*, 61, 328; language, 54; and military history, 329, 330; religion, 131
- monsoons:** 15
- Moslem religion:** 4, 131
- Moslems:** 28, 60, 131, 143, 268
- Motion Picture Agency Board:** 205
- Moulmein (city):** 13, 20; English usage, 64; health, 93, 94; population, 21 (table 1), 43, 44; port, 277; rail line, 21; trade, 273; welfare, 96
- mountain peoples:** 55
- mountains:** 9, 10, 11 (fig. 2), 12, 14
- Mountbatten, Lord:** 160
- movie theaters:** 100
- music and dance:** 73, 118, 121
- Myanma Export-Import Agency:** 225, 289, 290
- Myintnge River:** 10
- Nāf River:** 17, 44, 192
- Nagani (Red Dragon) Book Club:** 128
- names:** 78, 87, 137, 150
- National Health Council:** 92
- National Health Laboratory:** 93, 95
- National Health Service:** 94
- National Intelligence Bureau (NIB):** 323
- National Museum (Rangoon):** 118
- National Service Law (military):** 327, 335
- National Solidarity Law:** 267
- National Town and Country Housing and Development Board:** 96
- National United Front:** 175, 178
- nationalism:** 1, 158, 159, 214, 328; and architecture, 120; and external influence and ideas, 155; and schools, 106; spread of, 32-33
- Nationalist China:** 46, 182, 282, 290
- nationalist movement:** 142, 173, 174, 176, 178
- nationalization, economic:** 7-8, 49, 182, 217, 240; foreign owned and controlled enterprises, 59, 63, 196; industry, 223, 244, 249-252 *passim*; land, 221, 222, 232; and management organizations, 268; and manpower shortages, 8, 224, 258; trade, 7, 225, 252, 271, 275, 276, 289
- natural features:** 10-17
- natural gas:** 245
- natural resources:** 228-230, 243
- Naval Training School:** 334
- Navy:** 336, 338, 340, 343
- Ne Win, General (and Prime Minister):** 1, 37, 96, 142, 161, 164, 173, 176-183 *passim*, 195, 206, 313
- Ne Win government:** v, 2, 215, 217; and agriculture, 227-235 *passim*; and banking, 297, 300; and budget, 305; caretaker government, 173, 175; and the constitution, 157; and courts, 166, 316; and economic life,

Ne Win government (*continued*)

219–226 *passim*; and education, 103, 115; and foreign aid, 96, 226, 291; and foreign investment, 248; and foreign policy, 185–198 *passim*; and gambling, 101; goals, 89, 181, 182, 185–186, 214, 222; and industrialization, 248; and industry, 243–244, 248–249, 252, 255; and labor, 40, 49, 244, 266; and ministries, 165; and nationalism, 155; and pharmaceutical plant, 255; and policymaking in AFPEL, 212; and political discussion, 199; and State Supreme Councils, 168; and taxes, 307; and trade, 271–278 *passim*, 289

Nehru, Jawaharlal: 189, 191, 194

New China News Agency: 190, 201

New York Times: 206

news agencies: 199

News Agency Burma (NAB): 201

newspapers: 199, 200–204; leading daily, 202 (table 6)

Nu, U (Prime Minister) (*see also* U Nu government): 34, 79, 128, 142, 160, 161, 164, 175–179 *passim*, 186–198 *passim*, 212, 213, 255, 266, 267, 274

Nu-Atlee agreement: 196

nurses, 48, 95

Officer Training School: 334

oil: aid, 245, 292, 293; exports, 281; nationalization, 244, 249, 250, 252; refining 224, 253; resource, 14, 245

oils, cooking: 238, 254, 275, 276, 284, 285 (table 12)

opium: 98

organizations (*see also* political parties): international, 2, 197–198; labor, 7, 257–270; management, 268; reading clubs, 200; religious, 200; social, 72–75; and welfare, 95

Ottawa Agreements: 286

pagodas: 119, 120, 134, 135, 136, 137, 140, 143

Pakistan: border, 17; relations with, 192; trade, 287 (tables 13, 14)

Pakistanis: attitudes toward, 155; as ethnic group, 59–60; language, 54–55; population, 42, 43, 45; religion, 131, 143; repatriation, 45, 59

Panglong Conference: 46, 207, 214

Parliament: 33, 36, 37, 162, 166, 167, 168, 332

Party Affairs Bulletin: 206

peanuts: production, 236 (table 7), 237; trade, 275, 283; yield, 238

Peasant Seminars: 182, 202, 207, 217, 223, 235

peasants (*see also* farmers): and politics, 180–181, 182

Peasants' Councils: 182, 201, 268

Pegu Division: 9, 30; agriculture, 228; industry, 251; as political division, 18

Pegu Yoma (mountain range): 14, 15

penal system: 324–325

pensions, old-age: 96

People's Banks: 224, 300, 301, 302, 303, 308

People's Bawdwin Industry: 250

People's Cigarette Industry: 250

People's Courts: 166

People's Oil Company: 250

People's Police Force: 310, 318, 321; grades and rank, 322 (table 17)

People's Stores Corporation: 225, 275, 276, 289, 290

People's Workers' Council: 267

petroleum: *See* oil

pharmaceutical plant: 221, 243, 250

pharmaceuticals: 93, 244, 247, 255, 288

pharmacists: 95

physical environment: 9–22

physicians and surgeons: 48, 94–95

plains peoples: 55

police: 318–322; equipment, 291, 321; rank and pay, 322 (table 17); training, 321; uniforms, 322

Police Council: 318

Police Officers Academy: 321

political activity (*see also under* monks *and* students): attitude toward participation, 173; control, 182; and self-government, 6–7, 159; Thein Pe Myint accounts of, 128

political divisions (*see also* specific divisions): 2, 18–19, 170 (fig. 3)

political leaders: 174–176

political parties: (*see also* political activity): 1, 7, 173–179 *passim*, 180–183 *passim*, 201, 212; attitude toward, 152; status of BSPP, 182; and labor unions, 7, 257, 258, 264–267 *passim*; and monks, 178; student, 178, 179; in villages, 180, 181

politics (*see also* political activity, political leaders, political parties):

- 173-183; customs, 212-213; the elite, 209, 210-212; and farmers, 180-181; importance of *pon*, 181, 210; and labor, 264-265, 266, 267; military in, 215-217; symbolism, 217-218; values and attitudes, 60, 61, 62, 152, 209-218
- polygyny: 57, 83
- population (*see also under specific ethnic group*): 39-46; age and sex, 41 (table 3); Buddhists in, 43; control, 44, 84; density: 12, 39, 42; ethnic groups, 42 (table 4), 51-55; growth rate, 3, 39, 43; major cities, 21 (table 1); origins, 23-24; rural, 10, 19, 39, 40, 41 (table 3), 55; settlement patterns, 19-21; structure, 40-43; total, 39; urban, 4, 41 (table 3)
- pon*: and husband-wife relationships, 83; and politics, 181, 210
- pongyi*. *See* monks and monkhood
- ports: 277
- post installations: 21
- Post Office savings, 304
- Postal Telegraph and Telephone International: 270
- precious and semi-precious stones: 14, 254
- president: 161, 164
- Presiding Monks Association: 178
- price controls: 224, 225, 274, 275
- Primary People's Courts: 317
- Printers and Publishers Registration Act: 201
- prisons: 324-326
- private investment: 295, 300
- Private Schools Act, 109-110
- property: private, relationship of state to, 163; rights, 80
- public debt: 307-308
- public housing: 96
- public information: 199-208, 212
- Public Law 480: 282, 295
- public office: attitude toward, 152
- public order and safety: 309-325
- Public Services Commission: 171
- Public Services Enquiry Commission: 171
- publishing: 205
- punctuality and time: attitudes toward, 149
- punishment: 151, 163, 314-316
- Phi Thu Nazin* (official newspaper): 201, 202
- Pyidawtha Conference: 36, 95
- Pyidawtha Plan: 89, 221, 222
- radio: 204-205, 208, 321
- Radio Peking: 208
- railroads: 21, 272, 278
- rain forest: 16
- rainfall: 2, 14, 15, 16, 228, 229, 237
- Rangoon (city): 2, 20, 26, 34, 176, 191; architecture, 120; attitudes toward supernatural, 154; clothing, 99; communications, 18, 199, 200; employment exchange, 259; English usage, 64; health services and facilities, 91-95 *passim*; industry, 251; labor, 60, 257, 262; manufacturing, 243; peasants' seminars, 268; police, 318, 319, 322; population, 21 (table 1), 43, 44; port facilities, 277; power, 246; prisons, 324; roads, 22, 279, 291; schools, 106-116 *passim*; steel mill, 256; trade, 272, 273, 275; transportation, 21, 22; unemployment, 49; wages, 260; welfare, 96
- Rangoon Arts and Sciences University: 110, 111
- Rangoon Central Model State School: 107
- Rangoon General Hospital: 92, 95
- Rangoon Institute of Education: 113
- Rangoon River: 20, 21, 253
- Rangoon Technical High School: 108
- Rangoon University: 127, 128, 174, 178, 291, 293, 327
- Rangoon University Student Union: 178
- rats: 17
- recreation: 100-101, 149
- refugees: 44
- religion (*see also* Buddhism, Buddhists, ceremonies and celebrations, Hindu religion, Moslem religion): 43, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 70; and education, 69 114; and family, 77-88 *passim*; freedom of, 162, 217; and health and sanitation, 90; history, 25, 26-28; influence, 145-147; organizations and groups, 73, 200; and politics, government position, 217; and reverence for elders, 80
- Restriction on Engagement Act: 259
- Reuters (British news agency): 201
- revenue, government: 167, 223, 226, 306-307

Revolutionary Council (of military officers): 1, 38, 108, 142, 157, 164, 165, 181, 182, 183, 186, 201, 206, 207, 216, 217, 248-252 *passim*, 260-271 *passim*, 313, 316, 318, 324, 331, 332, 337; Chairman, 164; goals, 7
 revolutionary movement: objectives, 216
 rice: 6, 55-59 *passim*, 190, 191, 195; and aid, 285-286, 292; cultivation, 220, 234, 236-237; and diet, 97, 98; export, 22, 220, 223, 225, 271, 275, 277, 281, 283, 284 (table 11), 289; heartland, 12; labor, 48, 260, 261; management organization, 268; markets, 193, 225, 226, 285-291 *passim*; mills, 48, 249, 254; prices, 221; production, 227, 228, 231, 235, 236 (table 7), 237, 254; trade, 223, 228, 271, 274, 275; yield, 236
 riots: 45, 159, 179
 river systems: 12-14, 19-20
 roads and highways: 22, 47, 278-279, 291
 rubies, 14, 126, 254
 Rumania: 245, 292
 rural areas (*see also* villages): 69-70; and communications, 199; health, 93, 94; police, 320-321; population, 10, 19, 39, 40, 41 (table 3), 55; recreation, 149; trade, 273
 rural-urban differences: 152-155
 Russian: teaching of, 197, 208
 Russian Gift Project: 291, 295

 Sagaing: as political division, 18
 salt fields: 14
 Salween River: 10, 13, 20, 24, 64, 92, 277, 278
sangha: *See* monks and monkhood
 sanitation: 90, 97, 99
 Sao San Htun Hospital: 93
 sapphires: 14
 Saw, U (Prime Minister): 33, 35
 scholarships: 112, 212
 schools: Buddhist, 69, 85, 104-105, 114; Chinese, 59, 191; Christian, 61; cultural subjects, 118; English as a foreign language, 64; for health workers, 95; language of instruction, 64, 103-104, 105, 110, 114, 116; middle cycle, 107, 108; for missionary monks, 142; and nationalization, 8; non-Buddhist, 43; primary and secondary, 106, 107-108; pri-

vate, 103, 109-110; technical and vocational, 106, 108-109
 sculpture: 119
 Seagrave, Dr. Gordon ("Burma Surgeon"), 93
 seal of state: 218
 Seamen's Union of Burma: 270
 Security and Administrative Committee; 169, 317, 318
 Sein Tin, U (writer): 127
 separatism: 214-215
 sesame seed: production, 236 (table 7)
 Shan Plateau: agriculture, 228; disease, 91; forests, 15, 229; natural features, 10; population, 19, 56; soil, 15; timber, 240
 Shan State: 18, 51, 101; agriculture, 234, 237, 238, 239; courts, 318; dwellings, 100; erosion, 230; government, 166, 167; Kuomintang forces in, 37; language, 52, 53; minerals, 14, 221, 245; opium, 98; population, 43, 56, 57, 58; power, 246; rice, 236
 Shans (people): 3, 5, 28, 31, 46: attitude toward government, 62, 179; characteristics, 215; as ethnic group, 56-57; glass mosaic decoration, 126; insurrectionists, 193; language, 53, 64; political organization, 61; population, 42 (table 4), 53; relations with other ethnic groups, 61; religion, 131
 Shawe U-daung (writer): 129
 shipping: 272, 277-278
 silk industry, 123-124, 284
 silver: 14, 243, 245, 254, 282; production, 253 (table 10)
 Sino-Burmese border: 282; treaty, 17, 292
 Sino-Indian Tibet Treaty: 189
 Sino-Soviet Asian strategy, 189
 Sittang River: 12, 13, 19, 20, 42, 58, 63, 220, 228, 234, 278
 Sittang Valley: 26, 28, 229
 skilled labor, 8, 49, 115, 224, 258
 snakes: 16
 social attitudes and values: 145-155, 259
 social controls: 310-312
 social and economic development plans: 36, 95, 222, 247, 305
 social relations: 150; among ethnic groups, 60-63
 Social Security Act: 262

- Social Security Board: 261
social security system: 96
social structure: 65-75, 149-150
social welfare organizations, 75
socialism (*see also* Burmese Way to Socialism, nationalization, Ne Win government): 1, 175, 182, 183, 197, 203-215 *passim*; 222
Socialist Economic System Establishment Committee: 249, 276
Soe, Thakin: (political leader), 34
soils: 14-15, 230
Soviet Union: 93; aid, 230, 282, 286, 291, 292; relations with, 189, 196-197; Russian Gift Project, 291, 295; Russian textbooks, 208; trade, 289; trade agreements, 226, 286
Special Technical and Economic Mission, 290
sports: 101, 149, 200, 207
Stable Party: 175
State Agricultural Bank: 222, 233, 299
State Agricultural Marketing Board: 223-228 *passim*, 271, 274, 275, 289, 295-306 *passim*
State Commercial Bank: 299, 300, 301
State Councils: 166-168
State Timber Board: 224, 240, 274, 289, 290
status: 65-72 *passim*; achievement of, 149-152; and age, 75, 79, 80; and education, 69, 71, 114-115; family, 79-80; occupation and, 49-50, 68, 71, 114, 174, 264; and religion, 68, 70, 71, 72, 134; and titles of address, 78; urban population, 71; and wealth, 69, 70, 71; women, 79, 80
steel: 221, 224, 243, 244, 247, 250, 255, 256, 292
Sterling Area: 298, 302
Stillwell Road: 22
students: and leftists, 178-179; political activities, 111, 159, 173, 174, 179, 183, 217; political parties, 178, 179
suffrage: 159, 162
sugar: 221, 254-255, 292
supernatural: 144, 145-147, 154
Supreme Court: 163, 164, 166
TASS (Soviet news agency): 201
taxes: 306-307
tea: 48, 235, 247, 284; production, 238-239, 255
teachers: 48, 112-113, 139
teaching methods: 112-114
teak: 15-16, 100, 227, 240, 241, 283, 288; exports, 224, 225, 284 (table 11)
Technical Cooperation Mission: 195
technical training: 258; attitude toward, 71, 115
Tenancy Act: 233
Tenasserim Division: 9, 29, 33; climate, 15; erosion, 230; language, 52; minerals, 14, 245, 253; as political division, 18; population, 42, 61; rice, 228, 235; rivers, 13
Tet To (writer): 129
textiles: 221, 223, 224, 243, 244, 247, 249, 254, 272, 281, 286, 291, 292; imports, 225, 255, 282, 284, 285 (table 12), 288, 291
Thadu (writer): 129
Thailand: 21, 24, 37, 46; art influence, 121; border, 17; relations with, 192; roads into, 22
Thakin Soe (political leader): 34
Thakin Than Tun (political leader): 34, 35
Thakins (nationalist group): 32-33, 37, 159
Than Tun. *See* Thakin Than Tun
Thant, U (UN Secretary General): 187
Thein Han, U (writer): 128
Thein Pe Myint (writer): 128
Theravada Buddhism: 27, 28, 56, 59, 131, 132-133, 139
"Thirty Heroes". *See* Thakins
timber (*see also* teak): 223, 224, 240, 249, 250, 251, 277; exports, 281, 282, 283, 288
Time (magazine): 206
Tin, U (architect): 120
Tin Pe, Colonel: 182
tin: 243, 282, 283; production, 253 (table 10)
titles of address: 78, 79
Tito, Marshal: 194
tobacco: industry, 260; products, 271
tractors: 228, 234, 292
trade: 55-59 *passim*, 192, 196; agreements, 286; commodities, 271; controls, 228; domestic, 49, 225, 271-279; employment, 4; government expenditures, 306; history, 5, 24-32 *passim*; labor force, 47 (table 5); nationalization of, 7, 225, 252, 271,

- trade (*continued*)
 275, 276, 289; personnel shortage, 115; traditional patterns, 272; women in, 80
 Trade Council: 225, 276, 290
 Trade Disputes Act: 268
 Trade Union Congress, Burma [TUC (B)]: 266
 trade unions: *See* labor unions
 Trade Unions Act: 264
 transfer payments: 294 (table 15), 295
 transport equipment: 254, 256, 281, 282, 284, 285 (table 12), 286
 transportation: 7, 9, 10, 12, 21-22, 47, 199, 251, 272, 276, 277-279, 306
 tungsten: 14, 243, 282, 283; production, 253 (table 10)
 Twante Canal: 21
- U (title of address): explanation, 79
 U Aye Maung (writer): 129
 U Ba Pe (nationalist leader): 33
 U Khin Maung (artist): 118
 U Nu (Prime Minister): 34, 79, 128, 142, 160, 161, 164, 175-179 *passim*, 186-198 *passim*, 212, 213, 255, 266, 267, 274
 U Nu government: 37, 155, 171, 178, 289, 305
 U Saw (Prime Minister): 33, 35
 U Thant (UN Secretary General): 187
 U Thein Han (writer): 128
 U Tin (architect): 120
 U Wun (writer): 128
 U Yaw (historian): 129
 unemployment: 40, 46, 49, 179, 257, 276; benefits, 96
 unification: 25, 31, 34, 39, 46
 Union Bank of Burma: 296-301 *passim*, 307, 308
 Union of Burma: 35, 46, 160, 161
 Union of Burma Airways: 279
 Union of Burma Chamber of Commerce: 268
 Union of Burma Five Star Line: 278
 Union of Burma Labor Organization (ULO): 266, 267, 269
 Union of Burma Shipping Board: 278
 Union of Burma Sports and Physical Education Committee: 101
 Union Day: 46
 Union Party: 175, 181
- unions: *See* labor unions
 United Kingdom. *See* Great Britain
 United Nations: 37, 106, 187, 188, 189, 191, 195, 197, 245; Children's Fund, 96
 United Press International (U.S. news agency): 201
 United States: 37; aid, 2, 226, 282, 285-286, 290-291, 295, 321, 342; and the armed forces, 327; films from, 205; as import supplier, 225, 287 (table 13), 288; relations with, 188-189, 194-196; trade, 225
 United States Central Intelligence Agency: 203, 205
 United States Information Service: 195, 207
 universities: 110-112
 University Education Law: 111
 University Training Corps: 334, 336
 Upper Burma: 2, 5, 67; agriculture, 222, 238; ceramics, 126; engineering works, 22; land tenure, 230; physical environment, 9; use of mechanical equipment, 115; water supply, 22
 urban areas (*see also* cities): 70-72; attitudes toward villagers, 154; labor force, 48; population, 41 (table 3); status, 150
 urban-rural differences: 152-155
- vegetation: 15-16
 Vietnam: 193
 Village Land Committees: 232
 villages (*see also* rural areas): 3-4, 6, 19, 20, 55, 58, 66; associations and organizations, 72-74; attitude toward education, 69, 71; attitude toward city life, 153; attitude toward government, 210; banks, 299; and British legal concepts, 312; courtship and marriage, 81; dwellings, 99-100; education, 69; electricity, 246; employment, 49; engineering works, 22; and family, 4, 78; government, 158, 168-169; headman, 66, 68, 69, 158, 168, 169, 181, 210; health, 93, 94; layout patterns, 20; loyalty to, 60; personal relationships, 70; and politics, 180-181; religion, 144; status determinants, 150; trade, 273-274; welfare, 97
 Voice of America: 208

<p>wages and salaries: 260–262; agriculture, 260–261; civil service, 171; industry and commerce, 260; military, 339; police, 321, 322 (table 17)</p> <p>water (<i>see also</i> hydroelectric power, irrigation): pollution, 90, 91; supply, 20 22, 229; transport, 272, 277</p> <p>water table: 14</p> <p>waterways: 10, 21</p> <p>wealth: attitude toward 4, 69, 70, 71, 153</p> <p>weaving: 124</p> <p>welfare: 95–97</p> <p>West: foreign aid, 187, 226; impact of, 23, 29, 117, 118, 120, 121, 123; influence on constitution, 157</p> <p>Western Mountain Belt: 12, 19</p> <p>White Flag Communists: 180</p> <p>wildlife: 16–17</p> <p>wire services: 199, 201</p> <p>women: in business and trade, 80, 272, 273; in labor force, 48; legal and property rights, 80; literacy, 116; nurses, 48, 95; organizations, 75; population, 40, 41 (table 3); role in marriage, 83; status, 5, 23, 48, 68, 79, 80; teachers, 112; wages, 261, 262; workday, 263</p>	<p>workday and workweek: 262</p> <p>Workers' College (Rangoon): 112</p> <p>Workers Councils: 182, 202</p> <p>Workers Hospital (Rangoon): 96</p> <p>Workers Seminar: 207</p> <p><i>Working People's Daily</i> (official organ): 201–202</p> <p>Workmen's Compensation Act: 263</p> <p>World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), 269</p> <p>World Health Organization (WHO): 91, 93, 94, 96</p> <p>Wun, U (writer): 128</p> <p>Yahan Nge Aphwe (Young Monks Association): 178</p> <p>Yahanpyu Aphwe (All Burma Young Monks Association): 178</p> <p>Yaw, U (historian): 129</p> <p>Young Men's Buddhist Association: 95</p> <p>Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA): training courses, 109</p> <p>Yugoslavia: credit, 292; relations with, 194</p> <p>zinc: 14, 243, 245, 254, 282; production, 253 (table 10)</p>
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